United Nations HRI/CORE/NOR/2013

International Human Rights Instruments

Distr.: General
24 January 2014

Original: English

Common core document forming part of the reports of States parties

Norway*

[6 November 2013]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

GE.14-40371

1440371

Please recycle

Contents

		Paragraphs	*Page*
I.	General information about Norway	1–91	3
	A. Geographical, economic, demographic, social and cultural indicators	1–73	3
	B. Constitutional, political and legal structure of the State	74–91	24
II.	General framework for the protection and promotion of human rights	92–172	28
	A. Acceptance of international human rights norms	92–98	28
	B. Legal framework for the protection of human rights at the national level	99–111	36
	C. Framework within which human rights are promoted at the national level	112–163	39
	D. Reporting process at the national level	164–172	46
III.	Information on non-discrimination and equality, and effective remedies	173–270	48
	A. Protection against discrimination – Introduction to the Norwegian legal framework	173–206	48
	B. Organization of the Government's efforts to promote equal rights and prevent discrimination	207-270	52

I. General information about Norway

A. Geographical, economic, demographic, social and cultural indicators

1. Geographical indicators

1. Norway is a monarchy situated in Northern Europe. It consists of the western and northern parts of the Scandinavian Peninsula and the northern territories of Jan Mayen and the Svalbard archipelago, and Bouvet Island, Peter I Island and Queen Maud Land in the Antarctic. To the east, Norway shares borders with Sweden, Finland and Russia, and to the north, west and south the country is surrounded by ocean: the Barents Sea, the Norwegian Sea, the North Sea and the Skagerrak. Norway's mainland coast, including fjords and bays, is more than 20 000 km long. Although it is Europe's sixth largest country in terms of land area, Norway is sparsely populated and ranks only 26th in terms of population.

2. Norway is divided into 19 counties and 428 municipalities (2013).

3. Distances are long – the distance between the southernmost point and the North Cape is about 2 500 km. There are dramatic variations in the landscape, which encompasses fjords, glaciers, waterfalls, mountains, lowlands, agricultural areas and large forests. Norway is one of the few countries in the world with fjords – deep indentations in the coastline formed by the scouring action of glaciers millions of years ago. The highest point is Galdhøpiggen (2 469 m above sea level). Sixty per cent of the mainland is less than 600 m above sea level, 20 per cent is 600–900 m above sea level and 20 per cent is more than 900 m above sea level.

4. The weather fluctuates considerably from year to year, especially in the north, which is on the edge of the global temperate zone. However, given the country's extreme northerly position, its mainland climate is surprisingly mild. Norway is the northernmost country in the world to have open waters. This is due to the trade winds that blow east–west across the Atlantic to the American continent and the warm currents flowing from the Equator to the Norwegian Sea, where the angle of the Norwegian coastline and the open path to the Arctic Ocean guides the temperate air and waters to more northerly latitudes.

5. Norway covers an area of 385 178 km^2. Seventy-nine per cent of Norway's 5 051 275 inhabitants (1 January 2013) live in urban settlements (942 urban settlements with populations of at least 200). In 2011 the proportional increase in the number of people living in urban settlements was 1.5 per cent (about 60 000). During the period from 2007 to 2012 the average population density of urban settlements in Norway rose from 1 593 to 1 643 inhabitants per square kilometres.

2. Economic indicators

(a) General remarks

6. Only a small percentage of Norway's land area is suitable for cultivation. However, the country is richly endowed with natural resources, including offshore petroleum and natural gas, various ores, fish, timber (70 250 km^2 is covered by productive forests) and hydropower. Norway is the seventh largest producer of hydropower in the world (2011). The Norwegian hydropower sector has been designed to accommodate variations in the natural supply of water to power stations and to match production with seasonal changes in demand. Thanks in part to these resources, Norway has become one of the world's richest countries per capita GDP, particularly in the offshore sector. This is partly due to its

proximity to the important markets of Western Europe, its easy access to energy, its well-developed industrial sector, its political stability and its high educational standard.

7. Norwegian industries are diversified, and there is a free market economy and generally low trade barriers. A significant share of the Norwegian economy consists of service industries, including wholesale and retail industries, banking, insurance, engineering, transport and communications, and public sector services. In 2012, the services sector as a whole accounted for approximately 55 per cent of GDP. Norway's petroleum industries, including exploration and extraction, accounted for 27 per cent of GDP and about 59 per cent of exports. Manufacturing accounted for just below 8 per cent of GDP.

8. The major manufacturing industries are food, beverages and tobacco, machinery and equipment, construction of ships and oil platforms, refined petroleum, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, fabricated metal products and computer and electrical equipment. There has been a marked division of the manufacturing industries in Norway. The industries delivering to the petroleum sector are experiencing outstanding growth, while more traditional export industries, are struggling due to low demand and high cost levels.

9. The discovery of substantial petroleum deposits in the Norwegian sector of the North Sea in the late 1960s and the start of North Sea oil production in 1971 has resulted in a well-developed petroleum sector. From the beginning of the 1970s this sector has accounted for the highest growth in the economy.

10. The exploitation of petroleum resources on the Norwegian continental shelf has had a major impact on the economy, and in 2012 Norwegian petroleum production totalled approximately 225 million standard m^3 of oil equivalents (scm o.e.). Norway is the world's seventh largest oil exporter and the third largest gas exporter.

(b) Economic power

11. In 2012 Norway's GDP amounted to NOK 2 097 billion, or approximately USD 499 billion (average rate of exchange in 2012). GDP was 3.1 per cent higher in 2012 than in 2011 in constant prices. In 2012 total foreign assets amounted to NOK 7 978 billion and liabilities to NOK 5 007 billion, resulting in a net external surplus of NOK 2 971 billion.

	2008	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
Gross domestic product (GDP) NOK million	2 559 914	2 382 330	2 544 226	2 749 963	2 906 814
Annual growth rate	0.1	-1.6	0.5	1.2	3.1
Gross national income (GNI) NOK million	2 548 101	2 395 797	2 574 222	2 765 346	2 964 207
NOK per capita GDP	536 735	493 513	520 379	555 202	-
NOK per capita GNI	534 258	496 303	526 506	558 308	-

12. Since 1970, annual economic growth has averaged 3.4 per cent in the total economy and 2.8 per cent in the mainland economy. Norway experienced strong economic growth from 2003 to 2007. Growth declined during the financial crisis and in the following year, but the impact of the crisis was less severe in Norway than in most other countries. During the last three years economic activity has increased and growth in mainland GDP reached 3.4 per cent in 2012, driven mainly by petroleum investments, housing investments and private consumption. Growth in mainland GDP slowed somewhat towards the end of 2012 and in the first half of 2013. In the national budget for 2014 GDP for Mainland Norway is projected to increase by 2.2 per cent this year and 2.7 per cent next year.

Public administration/expenditures

	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
	(mill. NOK)	Per cent	(mill. NOK)	Per cent	(mill. NOK)	Per cent	(mill. NOK)	Per cent	(mill. NOK)	Per cent
COF06 Housing and Community	15 545	1.5	16 548	1.5	17 635	1.5	18 379	1.5	19 029	1.5
COF07 Health	169 356	16.7	179 034	16.4	187 638	16.4	198 195	16.5	210 436	16.8
COF09 Education	132 400	13.0	142 677	13.0	148 344	13.0	151 694	12.6	157 628	12.6
COF10 Social services	389 625	38.4	426 490	39.0	449 934	39.4	480 395	40.0	505 787	40.4
Social expenditures	706 926	69.7	764 749	69.9	803 551	70.3	848 663	70.7	892 880	71.3
GDP	2 559 914		2 382 330		2 544 266		2 749 963		2 906 814	
Social expenditures /GDP		0.28		0.32		0.32		0.31		0.31
Public expenditures /GDP		0.40		0.46		0.45		0.44		0.43

13. The Government Pension Fund was established in 2006, and encompassed the former Government Petroleum Fund and the National Insurance Scheme Fund. The purpose of the Government Pension Fund is to facilitate the government savings needed to meet the rapid rise in public pension expenditures in the coming years, and to support long-term management of petroleum revenues.

14. The Ministry of Finance is responsible for managing the Government Pension Fund. The Ministry determines the general investment strategy of the Pension Fund and its ethical and corporate governance principles. Operational management of the Government Pension Fund Global has been delegated to Norges Bank and of the Government Pension Fund Norway to Folketrygdfondet.

15. The total market value of the Government Pension Fund was NOK 3 961 billion at the end of 2012, an increase of NOK 520 billion from 2011. Inflow of petroleum revenues amounted to NOK 276 billion, and positive developments in the financial markets increased the value of the Fund by approximately NOK 463 billion. Appreciation of the Norwegian krone, as measured against the currency basket of the Government Pension Fund Global, reduced the market value of the Fund by NOK 220 billion. However, changes in the Norwegian krone exchange rate do not affect the assessment of the Fund's international purchasing power.

16. Total accrued taxes as a percentage of GDP are estimated at 41.7 per cent for 2013 and the tax-to-GDP ratio is estimated at 45.3 per cent when adjusted for petroleum activities. The main goals of the tax system are to raise public revenues, whilst contributing to equitable distribution, high value added and efficient utilisation of society's resources.

17. After approaching the inflation target of the Central Bank in 2009 and 2010, inflation has dropped in the last two years and was down to 0.8 per cent in 2012. Currency appreciation has kept prices on imported goods low, but growth in domestic inflation has also been moderate. In addition, electricity has contributed significantly to bringing down inflation in this period. In the national budget for 2014 inflation is expected to pick up from the low level last year to 1.9 per cent this year and 1.6 per cent next year. Core inflation, as measured by the CPI adjusted for changes in taxes and excluding energy (CPI-ATE), is expected to increase by 1.5 per cent this year and 1.8 per cent next year.

Consumer price index

Year	*Annual rate of change in CPI*	*Annual rate of change in CPI-ATE*
2005	1.6	1
2006	2.3	0.8
2007	0.8	1.4
2008	3.8	2.6
2009	2.1	2.6
2010	2.5	1.4
2011	1.2	0.9
2012	0.8	1.2

(c) Employment

18. Norway is among the European countries experiencing the highest population growth (1.3 per cent from 2011 to 2012). The growth derives from high immigration. Many immigrants (about 50 per cent) claim that *work* is the reason for immigrating to Norway. As a parallel to high immigration, there has been high growth in employment. Since 2006 the number of employed persons has increased by about 10 per cent. The employment rate in 2012, however, is roughly the same as in 2005. Immigration accounts for some 70 per cent of the growth in employment after the EU enlargement in 2004 and for nearly all employment growth in 2012. The unemployment rate in Norway is low and virtually the lowest in Europe.[1]

Percentage of the total population in the labour force and unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force

Annual average 2010			*Annual average 2011*			*Annual average 2012*		
	Labour force	*Un employed*		*Labour force*	*Un employed*		*Labour force*	*Un employed*
15-74 years	71.9	3.6	15-74 years	71	23.3	15-74 years	71.5	3.2
15-19 years	42.3	12.2	15-19 years	40	11.2	15-19 years	42.3	10.9
20-29 years	78.2	6.5	20-29 years	78	6.0	20-29 years	78.0	5.8
30-39 years	89.3	3.4	30-39 years	89	2.9	30-39 years	88.0	2.8
40-49 years	87.9	2.2	40-49 years	88	2.0	40-49 years	88.0	2.1
50-59 years	82.7	1.8	50-59 years	83	1.6	50-59 years	82.8	1.7
60-66 years	53.6	1.1	60-66 years	53	1.2	60-66 years	54.7	0.8
67-74 years	11.9	0.6	67-74 years	12	0.6	67-74 years	11.9	0.3
Males			*Males*			*Males*		
15-74 years	75.0	4.1	15-74 years	74	3.4	15-74 years	74.4	3.6
15-19 years	40.5	13.9	15-19 years	38	11.2	15-19 years	39.7	12.7
20-29 years	80.8	7.6	20-29 years	80	6.0	20-29 years	80.1	6.8
30-39 years	92.7	3.7	30-39 years	92	2.9	30-39 years	91.1	3.1

[1] More information about employment in Norway is available at Eurostat: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home/.

Annual average 2010			*Annual average 2011*			*Annual average 2012*		
	Labour force	*Un employed*		*Labour force*	*Un employed*		*Labour force*	*Un employed*
40-49 years	90.5	2.5	40-49 years	90	2.0	40-49 years	90.6	2.4
50-59 years	85.8	2.1	50-59 years	85	1.6	50-59 years	85.5	2.0
60-66 years	58.4	1.6	60-66 years	58	1.2	60-66 years	59.9	0.7
67-74 years	15.6	0.5	67-74 years	16	0.6	67-74 years	15.2	-
Females			*Females*			*Females*		
15-74 years	68.7	3.0	15-74 years	69	3.1	15-74 years	68.6	2.7
15-19 years	44.2	10.6	15-19 years	43	10.0	15-19 years	45.2	9.4
20-29 years	75.6	5.1	20-29 years	75	5.3	20-29 years	75.8	4.7
30-39 years	85.8	3.0	30-39 years	85	3.0	30-39 years	84.6	2.6
40-49 years	85.1	1.8	40-49 years	86	1.8	40-49 years	85.2	1.7
50-59 years	79.6	1.4	50-59 years	80	1.6	50-59 years	80.1	1.4
60-66 years	48.8	0.7	60-66 years	48	1.2	60-66 years	49.4	0.8
67-74 years	8.6	1.5	67-74 years	10	0.7	67-74 years	8.7	-

Numbers of employed persons by major industry and age

Annual average 2012 (thousands)

		15-74 years	*15-24 years*	*25-39 years*	*40-54 years*	*54-74 years*
00-99 All industries	Total	2 592	348	843	903	499
	Men	1 368	175	447	475	271
	Women	1 224	173	395	428	228
01-03 Agriculture, forestry and fishing	Total	57	7	11	21	18
	Men	47	6	9	18	15
	Women	10	1	3	3	3
05-09 Mining and extraction	Total	59	4	22	24	10
	Men	48	3	18	18	9
	Women	11	1	3	5	1
10-33 Industry	Total	238	24	75	93	47
	Men	180	19	54	71	35
	Women	58	5	20	22	11
35-39 Electricity, water and renovation	Total	30	2	6	15	6
	Men	23	1	5	12	5
	Women	7	1	2	3	1

Annual average 2012 (thousands)

		15-74 years	*15-24 years*	*25-39 years*	*40-54 years*	*54-74 years*
41-43 Building and construction	Total	194	28	68	64	34
	Men	179	27	64	57	31
	Women	14	1	4	7	2
45-47 Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles	Total	358	101	106	102	49
	Men	192	46	62	56	28
	Women	166	55	44	45	22
49-53 Transportation and storage	Total	143	15	42	55	31
	Men	113	10	34	43	26
	Women	30	4	9	12	5
55-56 Hotels and restaurants	Total	68	26	23	14	5
	Men	27	9	10	6	2
	Women	41	17	13	8	3
58-63 Information and communications	Total	103	8	43	37	15
	Men	74	5	31	27	11
	Women	29	3	12	11	3
64-66 Finance and insurance	Total	52	3	16	22	11
	Men	26	1	9	11	5
	Women	26	2	7	12	5
68-75 Technical services, property	Total	163	9	59	59	37
	Men	98	5	31	35	27
	Women	65	4	28	24	10
77-82 Business services	Total	101	14	38	34	15
	Men	55	9	20	18	8
	Women	45	6	18	16	6
84 Public administration, defence and social insurance	Total	163	13	46	69	35
	Men	86	10	24	33	19

Annual average 2012 (thousands)						
		15-74 years	*15-24 years*	*25-39 years*	*40-54 years*	*54-74 years*
	Women	77	3	22	35	16
85 Education	Total	214	13	69	78	54
	Men	75	5	24	27	19
	Women	139	8	46	51	35
86-88 Health and social work	Total	545	59	185	187	113
	Men	102	11	39	31	21
	Women	442	48	146	156	93
90-99 Personal services	Total	100	21	31	28	20
	Men	40	7	13	10	9
	Women	61	14	18	17	11
00 Other activities	Total	4	1	1	1	1
	Men	2	1	1	0	0
	Women	2	0	1	1	0

3. Demographic features

19. The population of Norway is 5 051 275 (1 January 2013). The population of Oslo, the capital and largest city, was 622 966 on 1 January 2013.

Year	*Population size (in millions)*	*Population growth rate (%)*	*Inhabitants (per km2)*
2013	5 051 275	1.0131	17
2012	4 985 870	1.0133	16
2011	4 920 305	1.0128	16
2010	4 858 199	1.0123	16
2009	4 799 252	1.0131	16

20. The table below shows the population in rural and urban areas.[2]

Year	*Population in rural areas (in millions)*	*Population in urban areas (in millions)*
2012	1 011 611	3 957 981
2011	1 007 310	3 899 115
2010	-	-
2009	1 009 435	3 780 068
2008	1 000 943	3 722 786

[2] This type of statistics was not collected in 2010.

21. With regard to the dependency ratio (percentage of population under 15 and over 65 years of age), approximately 27 per cent of the population is below the age of 20, while approximately 22 per cent is above the age of 65. Women comprise about 49.8 per cent of the population while men comprise 50.2 per cent.

	2009		*2010*		*2011*		*2012*		*2013*	
	Men	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*	*Men*	*Women*
Total	**2 395 053**	**2 404 199**	**2 426 752**	**2 431 447**	**2 460 849**	**2 459 456**	**2 498 871**	**2 486 999**	**2 535 908**	**2 515 367**
<15	19.5	18.5	19.4	18.4	19.2	18.3	18.9	18.1	18.7	18.0
65<	11.7	15.7	11.9	15.7	12.2	15.8	12.4	16.0	12.8	16.2

22. The table below shows the birth rate and mortality.

Year	*Birth rate (live births per 1 000 inhabitants)*	*Mortality (deaths per 1 000 inhabitants)*
2012	11.9	8.3
2011	12.1	8.3
2010	12.5	8.4
2009	12.7	8.5
2008	12.6	8.7

23. The life expectancy of women is 83.4 years and of men 79.4 years (2012) as shown in the table below.

Year	*2008*		*2009*		*2010*		*2011*		*2012*	
Age	*m*	*w*	*m*	*w*	*m*	*w*	*m*	*w*	*m*	*w*
0	78.31	82.95	78.60	83.05	78.85	83.15	79.00	83.45	79.15	83.50
1	77.57	82.13	77.89	82.26	78.09	82.35	78.23	82.59	78.37	82.65
2	76.59	81.14	76.92	81.27	77.11	81.39	77.25	81.61	77.39	81.66
3	75.62	80.16	75.93	80.28	76.11	80.39	76.25	80.61	76.40	80.68
4	74.62	79.17	74.94	79.29	75.12	79.40	75.26	79.62	75.41	79.69

24. Fertility (live births per 1 000 women) is 1.85 (2012) as shown in the table below.

Year	*1991-1995*	*1996-2000*	*2001-2005*	*2006-2012*
Age (years)	*(live births per 1 000 women)*	*(live births per 1 000 women)*	*(live births per 1 000 women)*	*(live births per 1 000 women)*
15-19	15.2	12.4	9.3	8.3
20-24	82.6	70.6	59.9	58.6
25-29	137.7	130.9	123.3	123.8
30-34	100.2	107.8	113.2	124.9
35-39	37.2	43.5	47	56.3
40-44	5.6	6.9	7.8	10.1
45-49	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.5

25. The average household size (number of persons) was 2.2 in 2013. Families of single parents with children make up 20 per cent of all families (2011) when measured by number of recipients under the extended child benefit scheme. These numbers have been stable over the last years.

26. The majority of the population is Norwegian and have Norwegian as their native language. Immigrants (593 300) and persons born in Norway of parents who are immigrants (117 100) comprise 14 per cent of the population (2013). In terms of geographical region of origin, 356 143 have a European background, and 65 895 of these have a background from a country outside the EU/EEA. A total of 231 872 persons have a background from Asia, 88 764 from Africa, 21 486 from Latin America and 12 200 from North America and Oceania. The largest groups of immigrants are from Poland, Sweden, Lithuania and Germany. Thirty-three per cent of immigrants and 76 per cent of persons born in Norway of parents who are immigrants have Norwegian nationality (2011).

27. The official languages in Norway are Norwegian (there are two written versions of Norwegian, *bokmål* and *nynorsk*) and Sami (the language of Norway's indigenous people). Sami and Norwegian are languages of equal status. Sami (North Sami, Lule Sami and South Sami), Kven, Romanes and Romani are recognised as regional or minority languages in Norway and are protected under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

4. Historical background

28. In 1814, after Norway had been in a union with Denmark for more than four centuries, Denmark ceded Norway to Sweden as part of the Kiel Peace Agreement at the end of the Napoleonic Wars. Wishing to regain its independence, Norway drafted and adopted the Constitution still in effect today (the Constitution of 17 May 1814). Sweden agreed that Norway could retain its Constitution if the country accepted being a partner in a union under the King of Sweden. However, Norway had its own parliamentary assembly and an increasing degree of autonomy. The union with Sweden was formally dissolved in 1905 and Norway has been an independent country ever since. The day the Constitution was adopted, 17 May, is Norway's national day.

29. Norway's wealth increased steadily through the 1900s. The development of hydropower started in 1905 and the discovery and exploitation of oil and gas began in the 1970s. Norway also has longstanding maritime traditions, and is the sixth largest shipping nation in the world (2012).

5. Social and cultural features

(a) Education and training

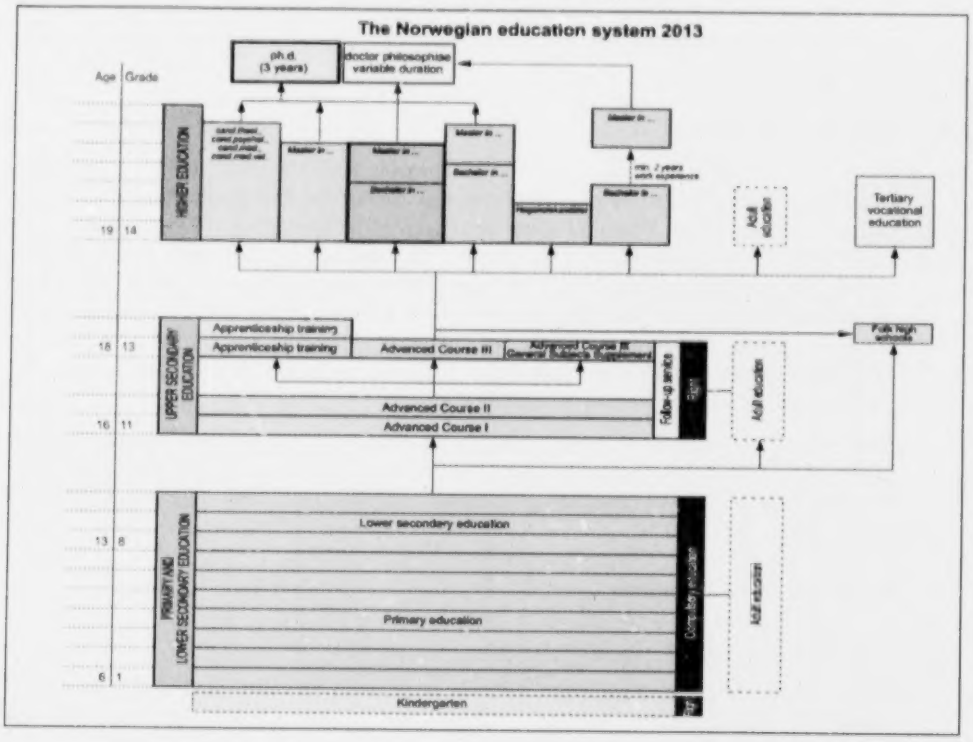
30. A well-educated population is the greatest asset of every nation. The education system lays the foundation for social cohesion and economic growth and is vital to the development of a democratic and unified society.

31. It is a challenge to any education and training system to facilitate learning and the optimal realisation of both individual and social potential. This is particularly so in a context of constant change and high levels of migration, where education and training needs are changing and becoming increasingly diversified. The Norwegian Government has chosen to address this challenge by laying the foundation for inclusive quality education. Equal opportunities and non-discrimination are basic principles and objectives for promoting access, stable attendance and learning. The education system is meant to give equal access to, and accommodate optimal learning for, *all* individuals, thereby helping to reduce social inequality.

32. Several measures have been implemented in the aim of promoting equity and equality. They target specific vulnerable or under-privileged groups and individuals. Children and youth with special educational needs are catered to in mainstream primary and lower secondary schools and in some specialised schools. Except for some minor special quota arrangements, *merit* is the only relevant factor above compulsory and rights-based education for regulating progress to higher education levels and specialised studies.

33. In 2012, 72 per cent of the total population aged 16 and older had attained upper secondary education or higher. The proportion of the total population in Norway with education below lower secondary school has declined over the last 30 years. In 2012, only 28 per cent of the total population aged 16 and older had a lower level of education than upper secondary school, compared with 45 per cent in 1980. The proportion of the population attaining tertiary education has doubled over the last two decades – from 13 per cent in 1980 to 27 per cent in 2012. (Post-secondary, non-tertiary education (ISCED 4) is not defined as higher education. The duration is a minimum of six months and a maximum of two years.)

34. The below figure illustrates the Norwegian education system.[3]



[3] Please note that kindergarten covers five years, i.e. children 1 year of age to children 6 years of age.

Highest completed education in population 16 years and older[4]

		1980	*1990*	*2000*	*2005*	*2010*	*2012*
Males	Basic school level	45.2	38.3	31.4	30	28.6	28
	Upper secondary education*	41.6	44.8	46.5	46	45.3	44.9
	Tertiary education short**	8.9	11.7	15.3	16.5	17.6	18.1
	Tertiary education long***	4.3	5.2	6.7	7.5	8.5	9
Females	Basic school level	52.2	44.6	35.9	32.4	29.6	28.4
	Upper secondary education	38.3	41.1	42.1	41.3	39.9	39.1
	Tertiary education short	8.8	12.9	19.1	22.3	24.9	26
	Tertiary education long	0.7	1.4	2.9	4	5.7	6.5

* Upper secondary education: Includes intermediate-level courses based on completed upper secondary level, but not accredited as tertiary education.

** Tertiary education, short. comprises higher education up to 4 years in duration.

*** Tertiary education, long: comprises higher education exceeding 4 years in duration.

Kindergarten

35. In 2009 an individual legal right to kindergarten was introduced. A child born before the end of August has a right to a place in kindergarten in the main enrolment in August of the following year. The Government has the overall responsibility for quality-development, management and financing of the sector, and kindergarten operation is included in the general purpose grants. The county governors implement kindergarten policy through development activities, administrative tasks, supervision and guidelines for municipalities. The municipalities are responsible for providing and operating municipal kindergartens, as well as for approving and supervising both public and private kindergartens in the municipality.

Percentage of children attending kindergarten by different age groups

Year	*1-5 years*	*1-2 years*	*3-5 years*
2005	76	53.9	90.6
2006	80.3	61.8	92.8
2007	84.3	69.3	94.4
2008	87.1	74.7	95.5
2009	88.5	77.1	96.2
2010	89.3	78.8	96.5
2011	89.6	79.5	96.5
2012	90.1	80.2	96.6

Primary and secondary education and training

36. Primary and lower secondary education is compulsory, encompasses education for children aged 6 to 15 and is administered by local authorities. This includes pupils from 1st to 10th grade level. The local authorities are required to offer before and after-school care from 1st to 4th grade. Upper secondary education and training normally comprises three

[4] People with unknown or no education are not included.

years of general education or four years of vocational training after the 10-year compulsory education. The norm for apprenticeship is two years of vocational training in upper secondary education followed by two years of apprenticeship. The county authorities administer upper secondary education and training.

37. Ninety-two per cent of the age-group 16-18 attend upper secondary education and training, with no significant gender differences (2012). Fifty-three per cent of pupils in year one attend a vocational education programme. In the 2012–2013 academic year, 29 per cent of pupils in year three had an apprenticeship. Fifty-six per cent complete their education in three to four years, 69 per cent after five years. Completion rates are lowest for male pupils and for pupils starting vocational training. These rates have been stable during the past ten years.

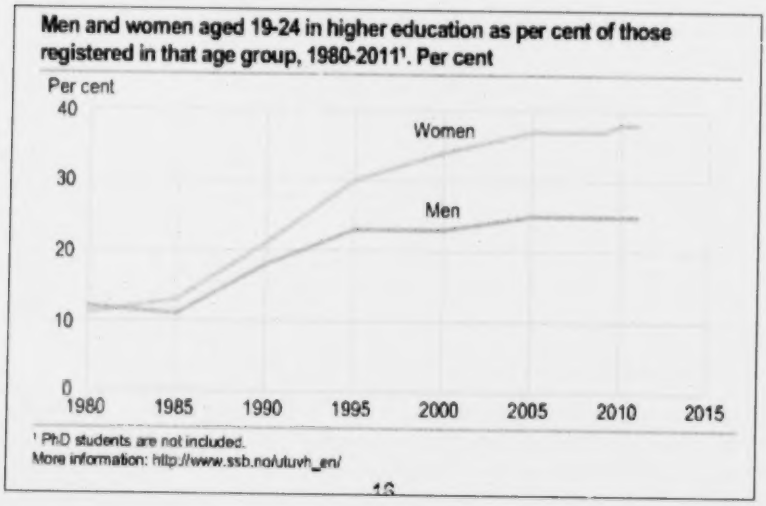
Pupils, apprentices and trainees in upper secondary education in per cent of registered cohorts, 16-18 years

	2010	*2011*	*2012*
Total population	91	91.5	91.8
Immigrants	64.4	67.6	71.5
Norwegian-born to immigrant parents	90.1	90.7	91.3

Higher education

38. The state is responsible for the majority of universities and university colleges, which are directly subordinate to the Ministry of Education and Research. Each institution has a board, which is responsible for the direction and organisation of operations. Accredited institutions have been awarded extensive academic autonomy. University colleges decide for themselves which studies and topics they are to offer at first-degree level. Universities determine for themselves which subjects and topics they wish to offer at all levels, including doctoral programmes.

Statistics related to higher education



New entrants[1] to higher education in 1995, 2000, 2004 and 2005, and awarded qualification after five years[2]. Absolute figures and per cent

Awarded qualification	1995	2000	2004	2005
Total	**38 824**	**40 118**	**40 729**	**41 333**
Total	100	100	100	100
Doctorates, PhDs	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.2
Higher graduates from programmes longer than 4 years	5.0	5.5	8.3	8.9
Higher graduates from 2-4 year programmes	43.2	35.9	37.9	38.7
No awarded qualification	51.7	58.5	53.6	52.3

[1] Students who enrolled in tertiary education for the first time 1.10.1994-30.9.1995, 1.10.1999-30.9.2000, 1.10.2002-30.9.2003, 1.10.2003-30.09.2004. [2] Awarded qualification at 31.12 five years after the student enrolled in tertiary education for the first time.
More information: http://www.ssb.no/hugjen_en/

Adult education and literacy

39. Although the literacy rate in Norway is close to 100 per cent, literacy tests have shown that a small amount of the adult population lacks basic competencies in reading and writing. In order to meet the needs of this heterogeneous group, measures have been implemented by the formal schooling system, in cooperation with employers' organisations and study associations for adults. Adults in Norway have a statutory right to primary and lower secondary education. Adults over 25 years of age have a right to upper secondary education and training. Quality and relevance in adult education and literacy work requires cooperation across ministries and across sectors in local and regional administration.

40. A national qualification framework for lifelong learning (LLL), based on formal qualifications, has been established by the Government. A key to realizing LLL for adults is the validation of non-formal competence. Norway has established a system for such validation.

(b) Poverty

41. The total number of private households is 2 258 794, with an average of 2.2 persons per household (2013 figures). Eighteen per cent of all persons in Norway live alone. This means that 40 per cent of all households consist of one person. Seventy-five per cent of all children lived with both their parents, 21 per cent of the children lived with their mother and 4 per cent with their father.

The Gini-coefficient for after tax household income (EU-scale) for the Norwegian population as a whole

Year	*2005*	*2006*	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*
	0.327	0.243	0.252	0.248	0.241	0.245	0.247

Income statistics for households/distribution of income

Distribution of household equivalent income after taxes[5] between persons (EU-scale)/ Decile shares and cumulative decile shares, 2007-2011. Persons in student households are excluded (per cent)

Decile group										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2007	4.0	6.1	7.1	8.0	8.7	9.5	10.4	11.5	13.3	21.4
2008	4.0	6.1	7.2	8.0	8.8	9.6	10.5	11.6	13.3	20.8
2009	4.0	6.2	7.3	8.1	8.9	9.7	10.6	11.7	13.4	20.2
2010	4.0	6.2	7.2	8.0	8.8	9.6	10.5	11.6	13.3	20.6
2011	4.0	6.2	7.2	8.0	8.8	9.6	10.5	11.7	13.4	20.6
Cumulative decile shares										
2007	4.0	10.1	17.2	25.1	33.9	43.4	53.8	65.4	78.6	100.0
2008	4.0	10.1	17.2	25.2	34.1	43.7	54.2	65.8	79.2	100.0
2009	4.0	10.3	17.5	25.6	34.5	44.2	54.8	66.5	79.8	100.0
2010	4.0	10.2	17.4	25.5	34.3	43.9	54.5	66.1	79.4	100.0
2011	4.0	10.1	17.3	25.4	34.2	43.8	54.4	66.0	79.4	100.0

Measures of income dispersion/household equivalent income[6] (EU-scale) between persons, 2007-2011

Total populations				*Total populations excluding persons in student households*			
Year	*Gini coefficient*	*P90/P10**	*S80/S20***	*Year*	*Gini coefficient*	*P90/P10**	*S80/S20***
2007	0.252	2.8	3.7	2007	0.244	2.7	3.5
2008	0.248	2.8	3.6	2008	0.240	2.7	3.4
2009	0.241	2.8	3.5	2009	0.231	2.6	3.3
2010	0.245	2.8	3.6	2010	0.236	2.6	3.3
2011	0.247	2.8	3.6	2011	0.237	2.7	3.4

* Percentile ratio of the 9th and the 1st decile cut-offs.

** The ratio of the share of income held by the top 20 per cent of the distribution and the bottom 20 per cent of the distribution.

[5] Negative amounts have been set to zero.

[6] Negative amounts have been set to zero.

Household equivalent income (EU-scale) for different percentiles of the income distribution, 2011-NOK[7]

	2007	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*Per cent change 2010-2011*
P05	144 000	149 000	151 000	152 000	156 000	2.6
P10	173 000	179 000	181 000	182 000	187 000	2.6
P20	211 000	219 000	219 000	221 000	228 000	3.1
P30	241 000	250 000	249 000	250 000	259 000	3.4
P40	266 000	277 000	275 000	277 000	286 000	3.4
P50	291 000	303 000	300 000	302 000	312 000	3.3
P60	317 000	330 000	327 000	329 000	340 000	3.4
P70	348 000	362 000	358 000	361 000	374 000	3.4
P80	390 000	405 000	400 000	404 000	419 000	3.7
P90	464 000	481 000	473 000	478 000	497 000	3.9
P95	551 000	568 000	555 000	563 000	587 000	4.2
P99	897 000	895 000	850 000	875 000	916 000	4.7
Number of persons	4 591 921	4 652 105	4 704 961	4 756 689	4 812 393	

(c) Health

42. Infant mortality (deaths within the first year of life per 1 000 live births) is 2.5 (2012). The average for the last five years has been 2.7. The table shows infant mortality for the period 1966-2010.

Year	*Deaths under one year of age per 1 000 live births*
1966-1970	13.9
1971-1975	11.6
1976-1980	9.0
1981-1985	8.1
1986-1990	7.8
1991-1995	5.2
1996-2000	4.0
2001-2005	3,4
2006-2010	3.4

43. The table shows maternal mortality for the period 1999-2010.

Year	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*
	8.4	3.4	5.3	3.6	12.4	0	3.5	8.5	6.8	2	5	7

[7] Persons in student households are excluded.

44. The table shows the proportion of induced abortions as a percentage of live births for the period 2000-2011.

Year	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*
	24.7	24.5	24.5	24.6	24.7	24.6	25.0	25.9	26.3	25.1	25.2	25.1

45. The tables below show the number of new cases of HIV, AIDS, syphilis and gonorrhoea per year.

All ages

Year			*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
	Disease	*Gender*				
	HIV	Men	184	173	189	166
		Women	100	85	79	76
	AIDS	Men	14	21	17	23
		Women	5	2	2	2
	Syphilis	Men	72	111	123	106
		Women	4	7	7	3
	Gonorrhoea	Men	235	365	314	392
		Women	34	47	56	51

Age group 15-24

Year			*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
	Disease	*Gender*				
	HIV	Men	12	18	10	13
		Women	10	13	8	2
	AIDS	Men	0	0	0	2
		Women	1	0	0	0
	Syphilis	Men	5	21	7	10
		Women	2	4	3	0
	Gonorrhoea	Men	61	81	67	106
		Women	24	25	24	27

Age group 25-44

Year			*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
	Disease	*Gender*				
	HIV	Men	102	98	111	81
		Women	64	54	58	59
	AIDS	Men	7	9	10	16
		Women	2	2	0	1
	Syphilis	Men	49	69	79	50
		Women	2	2	4	3
	Gonorrhoea	Men	127	216	196	250
		Women	8	18	25	24

46. The table shows the number of new cases of communicable diseases.

Communicable diseases	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
AIDS	19	23	19	25
Botulism	-	1	-	-
Brucellosis	1	2	2	4
Campylobacteriosis	2 848	2 681	3 005	2 934
Chlamydia infection, genital	22 754	22 527	22 530	21 489
Cryptosporidosis	-	-	-	4
Diphtheria	-	-	-	-
E. coli enteritis	480	366	303	373
Echinococcosis	4	1	3	2
Encephalitis	139	174	311	270
Fleck typhus	-	-	-	-
Giardiasis	307	262	234	179
Gonorrhoea	269	412	370	443
Yellow fever	-	-	-	-
Haemorrhagic fever	-	-	-	-
Hepatitis A	40	46	22	40
Hepatitis B, acute	57	27	56	46
Hepatitis B, chronic	833	737	707	660
Hepatitis C	2 266	1 765	1 643	1 512
HIV infection	284	258	268	242
Influenza A (H1N1)	12 455	103	885	39
Pertussis	5 542	3 590	4 405	4 244
Cholera	-	-	-	-
Smallpox	-	-	-	-
Mumps	12	12	16	30
Legionellosis	34	48	33	25
Leprosy	-	1	1	-
Listeriosis	31	22	21	30
Lyme disease	273	288	247	256
Malaria	34	37	30	37
Measles	2	3	39	4
Anthrax	-	-	-	-
MRSA infection	417	431	563	575
MRSA carrier	402	478	496	635
Nephropathia epidemica	21	21	39	13
Paratyphoid fever	17	18	11	7
Plague	-	-	-	-
Poliomyelitis	-	-	-	-
Prions disease	11	5	7	9
PRP infection/carrier	8	8	3	11

Communicable diseases	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
Rabies	-	-	-	-
ESBLcarba-carrying Gram Negative Bacilli	-	-	-	13
Rubella	-	-	2	1
Salmonellosis	1 234	1 366	1 290	1 371
SARS	-	-	-	-
Shigellosis	153	132	163	77
Syphilis	76	118	130	109
Group A streptococcal diseases	171	159	179	137
Group B streptococcal diseases	174	166	191	203
H. influenzae infections	71	88	85	78
Meningococcal diseases	44	39	38	24
Pneumococcal diseases	798	747	728	626
Tetanus	1	-	-	1
Tuberculosis	358	336	358	378
Tularaemia	13	33	180	50
Typhoid fever	10	16	15	13
VRE infection/carrier	6	51	289	168
Yersiniosis	60	52	60	43
Total	**52 729**	**37 650**	**39 977**	**37 460**

47. The table shows the ten leading causes of death in Norway.

The ten leading causes of death in Norway	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*
Heart infarction	3 775	3 707	3 380	3 340	3 209
Males	1 961	1 971	1 780	1 800	1 639
Females	1 814	1 736	1 600	1 540	1 570
Malignant neoplasm of lung	2 098	2 110	2 057	2 166	2 180
Males	1 223	1 208	1 228	1 241	1 266
Females	875	902	829	925	914
Chronic ischaemic heart disease	1 845	1 749	1 817	1 688	1 609
Males	1 017	954	996	910	935
Females	828	795	821	778	674
Unspecified pneumonia	1 829	1 625	1 671	1 498	1 549
Males	810	741	698	626	703
Females	1 019	884	973	872	846
Other chronic obstructive pulmonary disease	1 769	1 852	1 805	1 814	1 843
Males	925	997	948	956	942
Females	844	855	857	858	901
Stroke, not specified as haemorrhage or infarction	1 711	1 736	1 558	1 537	1 521
Males	583	610	531	528	546
Females	1 128	1 126	1 027	1 009	975

The ten leading causes of death in Norway	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*
Heart failure	1 461	1 403	1 453	1 359	1 419
Males	580	550	541	523	526
Females	881	853	912	836	893
Senile dementia	1 293	1 343	1 397	1 509	1 562
Males	415	363	397	431	451
Females	878	980	1 000	1 078	1 111
Malignant neoplasm of colon	1 146	1 164	1 161	1 188	1 156
Males	536	541	534	559	535
Females	610	623	627	629	621
Malignant neoplasm of prostate	1 090	1 096	1 048	1 043	1 052
Males	1 090	1 096	1 048	1 043	1 052

48. The table shows new cases of tuberculosis per 100 000 for the period 2004-2012.

Year	*2004*	*2005*	*2006*	*2007*	*2008*	*2009*	*2010*	*2011*	*2012*
	6.6	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.6	7.5	6.9	7.4	7.6

(d) National Insurance Scheme

49. The Norwegian National Insurance Scheme is a universal scheme. This means that, as a general rule, membership in the scheme is compulsory for all those who either live or work in Norway, irrespective of nationality, place of residence, gender, age, sexual orientation, political conviction, religious belief, skin colour or whether the person in question is residing in a rural or an urban area. The scheme covers all nine traditional branches of social security set out in ILO Convention No. 102.

50. The social insurance schemes, by definition, target all vulnerable groups, as they are all designed to alleviate living conditions for persons who have experienced one or more specified contingencies that have been found to often lead to hardship, e.g. sickness, disability, unemployment, maternity.

51. In the following we will focus on the elderly. For a more comprehensive presentation of the Norwegian National Insurance Scheme, please see the survey entitled "The Norwegian Social Insurance Scheme", which can be found at the following site: http://www.regjeringen.no/upload/AD/publikasjoner/veiledninger_brosjyrer/2013/Engelsk_2013.pdf.

52. Reference is also made to Norway's latest report on the implementation of ILO Convention No. 102.

53. The pension system has recently undergone reform. The reform has introduced the possibility of flexible drawing of old-age pensions for persons aged 62 to 75. Pensions may be drawn in full or in part. The drawing alternatives are 20, 40, 50, 60, 80 and 100 per cent. Work and pension may be combined, with no deduction being made to the pension. Pensions drawn with effect from 2011 and later are subject to a life expectancy adjustment. A pensioner who continues to work acquires additional pension rights up to and including the year in which he or she attains the age of 75.

54. In order to draw an old-age pension before the age of 67, acquired pension rights must be sufficient to secure a pension at the age of 67 – that is, at least equal to the minimum pension level for persons with an insurance period of 40 years.

55. For persons born before 1954, the old-age pension consists of a residence-based basic pension, an earnings-related supplementary pension, supplements for supported spouse and children and a special supplement securing a minimum pension level for persons with little or no supplementary pension (as before). Persons born in 1963 or later are primarily granted an earnings-related pension, but a residence-based guarantee pension provides a minimum pension level (similar to the old system, but with new rules for calculation). For persons born between 1954 and 1962, one part of the pension is calculated according to the old rules and the other part according to the new rules. The latter part increases for each year after 1954 up to the person's year of birth.

56. According to the rules for persons born before 1954 (see above), persons who are insured for pension purposes and who have a total insurance period of minimum three years between the ages of 16 and 66 are entitled to a pension. For persons born in 1963 and later all pensionable income earned between the ages of 13 and 75 counts toward the income-based pension (no minimum requirement). However, a minimum insurance period of three years between the ages of 16 and 66 is required to be entitled to a guaranteed pension.

57. A full pension, according to the rules for persons born before 1954, requires an insurance period of minimum 40 years. If the insurance period is shorter, the pension is proportionately reduced. The full minimum pension as of 1 May 2013 is NOK 170 496 per year for single persons and NOK 315 408 for couples (NOK 157 704 for each).

58. Total expenditures on pensions under the National Insurance Scheme in 2012 were NOK 345 209 million. This amount represents approximately 35.4 per cent of the combined state and national insurance budgets and 12 per cent of GDP. The budget allocations to the national insurance scheme were NOK 96 575 million in 2012, which is equal to 28.0 per cent of the total expenditures under the scheme.

59. In addition to the National Insurance Scheme, a supplementary allowance scheme has been introduced. This scheme is also non-discriminatory. The purpose of the scheme is to provide financial support for elderly persons with shorter periods of insurance under the National Insurance Scheme.

60. As mentioned above, the general National Insurance Scheme covers in principle all residents of Norway. However, because 40 years' residence before the age of 67 is required in order to acquire a full residence-based pension, those who have lived in Norway for a shorter period may not qualify for a pension that is sufficient to live on. The new supplementary allowance scheme is intended to guarantee a minimum income for necessary means of subsistence for persons who have attained the age of 67 and who have inadequate pensions or other financial means of support because they have less than 40 years' residence.

61. The maximum size of the allowance corresponds to the minimum social insurance pension, see above. The allowance is subject to a strict means test and is reduced if the person or his/her spouse or cohabitant has other income from work or capital assets or a Norwegian or foreign pension. The capital assets and other property are in principle taken into account.

62. The allowance is supplementary to the ordinary pension benefits under the National Insurance Scheme, but excludes persons who are in receipt of the ordinary full, i.e. unreduced, conventional benefit.

63. The allowance is not conditional on a qualifying period or completed period of insurance.

(e) Crime and justice

64. In 2012 there were 164 police personnel per 100 000 inhabitants.

65. In 2012 there were 372 regular judges and 125 deputy judges in the courts of first instance, 175 judges in the courts of second instance and 20 judges in the Supreme Court.

66. In 2011, 278 000 persons received 317 000 sanctions, a decrease of 5.7 per cent and 4.9 per cent, respectively, from the previous year. In total, 6.5 per cent of the population 15 years or older received one or more sanctions. There was a decrease in the number of sanctions imposed by the courts. Of the total number of sanctions, 284 000 concerned misdemeanours, and 28 100 persons received 330 000 sanctions for crimes.

67. The statistics for 2011 show that 13 per cent of all resident men over the age of 15 were sanctioned more than once, as compared with 7 per cent of all women. Of those who were only sanctioned for misdemeanours, 74 per cent were men, while the corresponding figure for men sanctioned for a crime was 85 per cent. In 2011, 21 100 sanctions were imposed by the courts. The distribution of types of sanction imposed by the courts was almost the same as the previous year: 49 per cent unconditional imprisonment, 29 per cent conditional imprisonment, 12 per cent community sentence and 9 per cent fines.

68. In 2012, an average of 3 591 persons were imprisoned in Norway, a reduction of 0.9 per cent from the previous year but an increase of 31 per cent from 2002. On average in 2012, 2 494 persons were convicted prisoners, 82 were held in preventive detention, 945 were remanded in custody and 70 were imprisoned for non-payment of fines. The number of convicted prisoners fell from 2011 to 2012 by 2 per cent and the number of prisoners on remand fell by 1.5 per cent. The number of convicted prisoners increased by 27 per cent from 2002 to 2012, and remanded prisoners by 41 per cent. (The proportion of foreign nationals among remands in custody in 2002 was 21.5 per cent and in 2012 had increased to 53.6 per cent.) The proportion of female prisoners has remained fairly stable in recent years, at 5.6 per cent of the prison population in 2012 as opposed to 6 per cent in 2011 and 5.3 per cent in 2002. Fifty-one young persons (under 18 years) were imprisoned in 2012, 58 in 2011, 64 in 2010, 80 in 2009 and 59 in 2005.[8]

69. In 2012, 273 000 crimes and 120 000 misdemeanours were reported to the police, an increase of 3.6 per cent from 2011. There was a considerable increase in traffic misdemeanours (6.3 per cent), offences for profit (4.7 per cent) and narcotics crimes (7.3 per cent). In 2012, 26 700 threats and other violent offences were reported to the police, almost 2 per cent more than in the previous year. When the population increase is taken into account, the proportion of violent offences reported to the police has remained relatively stable since the turn of the millennium, about 5.4 per 1 000 inhabitants. In the last few years prior to 2012, the number of threats reported to the police has shown little change.

70. Norway has abolished the death penalty for all crimes both in peace and in war time.

71. More than 4 700 sexual offences were reported to the police in 2012. In 2012, 874 incidents of sexual intercourse with children and 124 incidents of incest (the same level as in the previous nine years) were reported to the police.

72. Theft and other offences for profit made up almost 46 per cent of crimes reported to the police in 2012. Almost 180 000 incidents of larceny and other offences for profit were reported to the police in 2012. After a general decline, there was an increase in several types of theft reported. These included theft from cafes and restaurants, bicycle theft and theft from shops. The total number of incidents of aggravated larceny from a person in a public place was 4 500 higher in 2012 than in 2011, and 9 600 higher than in 2010. Oslo contributed strongly to the increase in the total numbers of larcenies in Norway for 2012.

[8] 2005 is the earliest year with comparable figures.

73. Six deaths were registered in prison in 2012. Six prisoner deaths were registered outside prison (on the way to hospital or on leave).

B. Constitutional, political and legal structure of the State

1. Form of government

74. Norway is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary form of government. The Norwegian Constitution is based on a separation of powers, with an independent legislature, executive and judiciary. However, since the introduction of the principle of parliamentary government in 1884, it can no longer be maintained that the executive is independent of the legislature, as it cannot govern without the confidence of the legislative assembly. Together with constitutional customary law, the Constitution forms the legal framework for Norway's political system.

2. Democracy, political parties and the electoral system

75. The legislative assembly of Norway is the Storting. The Storting has 169 members, and parliamentary elections take place every four years. There are no by-elections, nor does the Constitution provide for dissolution of the Storting between elections. Because Norway has a parliamentary form of government, the Storting determines the composition of the Government. The Storting can also decide that a referendum should be held on a particular issue. The Storting has a Presidium, which is chaired by the President of the Storting and whose responsibilities include determining the Storting's order of business and ensuring that constitutional rules are upheld in all matters. As far as possible, the President avoids taking a stand on purely political issues on which there are divergent opinions. Laws are enacted by the Storting, usually on the basis of a bill submitted by the Government.

76. Elections to the Storting are held every fourth year. The voting age is currently 18 years. Norway practices universal suffrage. Everyone who is entitled to vote is eligible to stand for election. The Norwegian electoral system is based on the principles of direct election and proportional representation in multi-member constituencies, which are coherent with the counties. As of October 2013 eight political parties are represented in the Storting (the Labour Party, with 64 representatives, the Conservative Party, with 48 representatives, the Progress Party, with 29 representatives, the Centre Party, with 10 representatives, the Christian Democratic Party, with 10 representatives, the Liberal Party, with 9 representatives, the Socialist Left Party, with 7 representatives, and the Green Party, with 1 representative). There are a number of smaller political parties that are not represented in the Storting. Groups that are not political parties may also put up lists of candidates for election. At the general election in September 2013, the voter turnout was 78.2 per cent, and 40.3 per cent of the 4 081 candidates were women. In the current Storting 39.6 per cent of the members are women.

Distribution of seats in the Storting by party

Party	*Election period*	*No. of seats*
The Socialist Left Party (Sosialistisk venstreparti)	2005–2009	15
	2009–2013	11
	2013–2017	7
The Labour Party(Det norske arbeiderparti)	2005–2009	61
	2009–2013	64
	2013–2017	55

Party	*Election period*	*No. of seats*
The Centre Party (Senterpartiet)	2005–2009	11
	2009–2013	11
	2013–2017	10
The Christian Democratic Party (Kristelig folkeparti)	2005–2009	11
	2009–2013	10
	2013–2017	10
The Liberals (Venstre)	2005–2009	10
	2009–2013	2
	2013–2017	9
The Conservative Party (Høyre)	2005–2009	23
	2009–2013	30
	2013–2017	48
The Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet)	2005–2009	38
	2009–2013	41
	2013–2017	29
The Green Party (Miljøpartiet de Grønne)	2005–2009	0
	2009–2013	0
	2013–2017	1

Numbers of recognised national political parties

Year of election	*No. of parties*
2013	20
2009	22
2005	18
2001	18

Numbers and percentages of eligible voters

Year of election	*No.*	*Percentage*
2013	3 643 600	72.1
2009	3 530 785	73.6
2005	3 421 741	74.3
2001	3 359 433	74.5

Percentages of women members of the Storting

Parliamentary period	*Percentage*
2013–2017	39.6
2009–2013	39.6
2005–2009	37.9

77. Six national referendums have been held in Norway, and these have traditionally had a higher turnout than Storting elections, reaching a record 89 per cent when Norway voted on membership of the European Union (EU) in 1994. In 1905 Norwegians voted in favour of the dissolution of the union with Sweden and of offering the throne to Prince Carl of Denmark (who accepted and became King Haakon VII). In a referendum in 1919, Norwegians voted for the introduction of a ban on spirits, but after a new referendum in 1926 the prohibition was repealed. Norway voted against membership of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1972 and of the EU in 1994.

3. The Norwegian Government

78. The Government is formed by the party or parties that have a majority of the seats in the Storting or that constitute a minority capable of governing. Thus the Government is indirectly selected by the electorate. The Government consists of the Prime Minister and a number of ministers (18 ministers in October 2013). The Office of the Prime Minister assists the Prime Minister in leading and coordinating the work of the Government. The ministries are responsible for executing the policies decided by the ministers in the various sectors of the government administration. Formal decisions by the Government are made in the form of a Royal Decree.

79. The executive power is invested in the King, but Royal Decrees are adopted by the King in Council, which consists of the government ministers. The King fills an important symbolic function as head of state and Norway's official representative.

4. The Church of Norway

80. There is freedom of religion in accordance with a 1964 amendment to the Constitution. In 2012, the provision of the Constitution concerning the Evangelical-Lutheran religion as the official religion of the state was amended. The Constitution now states that the Christian and the humanistic heritage are core values of the state, and that the Church of Norway remains the Norwegian "folk church". At the same time, several amendments to the Constitution in 2012 made the church more independent of the state. According to the Constitution, all life stance and religious communities should be equally supported by the state. Approximately 77 per cent of the Norwegian population are members of the Church of Norway (2012).

5. Counties and municipalities

81. Norway is divided into 19 counties and 428 municipalities (2013), and a number of political decisions are made at these two levels. The Government delegates autonomous powers in certain policy areas to the county and municipal councils, and these areas are specified in legislation. Much of the public administration is also carried out at these levels. Elections to the municipal and county councils are held every fourth year. The voter turnout for the county municipal and elections in 2011 was 64.5 per cent. Unlike the Storting elections, where the vast majority of candidates represent registered parties, lists of local independent candidates are very common in county and municipal elections.

6. Legal structure

82. The administration of justice is carried out by the courts of law, which are fully independent of the other constitutional powers. There are three levels of courts: the District Court of first instance, the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court at the highest level. Civil and criminal cases may be heard at all levels. Civil cases are brought before the courts by the parties in the case, whereas criminal cases are brought by the prosecution authority. The legality of administrative decisions may be subject to control by a court. As a main rule, civil disputes are considered initially by a conciliation board, which is to be found in

every municipality and consists of laypeople. The ordinary courts are supplemented by special courts, including the Labour Court and the Land Consolidation Courts.

83. In 2002, administrative control of the courts was moved from the Ministry of Justice, where it had been since the creation of the Norwegian state in 1814, to the National Courts Administration. This body was established in order to safeguard the independence of the courts in relation to the other branches of government. The Ministry of Justice has no power to instruct the National Courts Administration, but has the main responsibility for drafting legislation relating to the courts.

84. The public administration agencies are also supervised by the Parliamentary Ombudsman for the Public Administration. The Ombudsman investigates complaints from citizens concerning an injustice perpetrated by a public agency. The Ombudsman processes complaints concerning administrative decisions at government, county and municipal levels, and may also take the initiative to investigate a matter.

85. The legal system is based on both legislation and customary law as sources of law. To meet the requirements under customary law the custom must have been consistently practised over a long period of time, and both the legal practitioners and society must have considered the custom to be legally binding. Customary law plays a considerable role in the law of damages, law of torts, contract law, public administration law and constitutional law.

7. Membership of the European Economic Area (EEA)

86. Norway is a party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA), under which the country participates in the internal market of the European Union (EU). Norway is also a member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

87. The EEA Agreement, which is an agreement between the member states of the European Union (EU) and Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, entered into force on 1 January 1994. The purpose of this agreement is to create a comprehensive economic partnership that extends the internal market of the EU to the participating EFTA states. The EEA Agreement provides for free movement of goods, persons, services and capital between the signatory countries. The enlargement of the EU on 1 May 2004 and 1 January 2007 had a direct impact on the Agreement, which explicitly states that a country becoming a member of the EU must also apply for membership of the EEA. As from 2007, there are three EFTA states (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and 27 EU member states participating in the European Economic Area (EEA). Negotiations are on-going with regard to extending the agreement to Croatia.[9]

88. The cooperation under the EEA Agreement does not include participation by the EEA- EFTA states in certain areas, such as the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, the Common Fisheries Policy, the Economic and Monetary Union, and the EU Taxation and Customs Union. However, the main principles of the EEA Agreement, e.g. the principle of non-discrimination, may apply also in those areas.

89. In December 1996, Iceland and Norway signed a cooperation agreement with the "Schengen states", a group of 13 EU member states. The Schengen cooperation provides for common rules for the movement of persons to and between participating countries. On 1 May 1999, the Schengen cooperation was integrated into the EU framework, and Norway and Iceland have negotiated an agreement on institutional solutions for continuing participation in the Schengen cooperation after its integration into the EU. The latter

[9] Updated July 2013.

agreement entered into force on 25 March 2001. The Schengen area currently consists of 26 states.

90. In addition to the EEA, Norway is a member of several other international organisations, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, the World Bank) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). Norway is a founding member of the United Nations and its subordinate agencies. Furthermore, Norway is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), as well as of the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Norway is also a member of the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB), the Nordic Investment Bank (NIB), the Nordic Development Fund (NDF), the Nordic Council, the Nordic Project Fund (Nopef) and the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO).

8. Recognition of non-governmental organisations

91. The Norwegian Register of Non-Profit Organisations was established in December 2008, and close to 30 000 non-profit organisations are registered there. The register is operated by the Brønnøysund Register Centre. Registration is voluntary. The main objective of the Register is to facilitate and improve interaction between the government and the voluntary sector.

II. General framework for the protection and promotion of human rights

A. Acceptance of international human rights norms

1. Main international human rights conventions and protocols

92. The status of ratification is set out in the table below.

Convention/ protocol	*Signature (S) Ratifications (R)*	*Reservations Declarations*	*Acceptance of optional procedures*
International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), 1966	R 13/09/1972	Subject to reservations to Article 8, paragraph 1 (d) "to the effect that the current Norwegian practice of referring labour conflicts to the State Wages Board (a permanent tripartite arbitral commission in matters of wages) by Act of Parliament for the particular conflict, shall not be considered incompatible with the right to strike, this right being fully recognised in Norway."	
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1966	R 13/09/1972	Subject to reservations to Article 10, paragraph 2 (b) and paragraph 3 "with regard to the obligation to keep accused juvenile persons and juvenile offenders segregated from adults" and to Article 14, paragraphs 5 and 7 and to Article 20, paragraph 1. 19 September 1995	31 August 1972 "Norway recognises the competence of the Human Rights Committee referred to in Article 28 of the Covenant to receive and consider communications to the effect that a State Party claims that

Convention/ protocol	*Signature (S) Ratifications (R)*	*Reservations Declarations*	*Acceptance of optional procedures*
		[The Government of Norway declares that] the entry into force of an amendment to the Criminal Procedure Act, which introduces the right to have a conviction reviewed by a higher court in all cases, the reservation made by the Kingdom of Norway with respect to Article 14, paragraph 5 of the Covenant shall continue to apply only in the following exceptional circumstances: 1. "Riksrett" (Court of Impeachment) According to Article 86 of the Norwegian Constitution, a special court shall be convened in criminal cases against members of the Government, the Storting (parliament) or the Supreme Court, with no right of appeal. 2. Conviction by an appellate court In cases where the defendant has been acquitted in the first instance, but convicted by an appellate court, the conviction may not be appealed on grounds of error in the assessment of evidence in relation to the issue of guilt. If the appellate court convicting the defendant is the Supreme Court, the conviction may not be appealed under any circumstances whatsoever.	another State Party is not fulfilling its obligations under the Covenant."
Optional Protocol to ICCPR, concerning individual petition, 1966	R 13/09/1972	Subject to the following reservation to Article 5, paragraph 2: "... The Committee shall not have competence to consider a communication from an individual if the same matter has already been examined under other procedures of international investigation or settlement."	
Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, concerning abolition of the death penalty, 1989	R 05/09/1991		
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, (ICERD), 1965	R 06/08/1970		23 January 1976 Norway recognises the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination to receive and consider communications from individuals or groups of individuals within the jurisdiction of Norway in accordance with Article 14,

Convention/ protocol	*Signature (S) Ratifications (R)*	*Reservations Declarations*	*Acceptance of optional procedures*
			with the reservation that the Committee shall not consider any communication from an individual or group of individuals unless the Committee has ascertained that the same matter is not being examined or has not been examined under another procedure of international investigation or settlement.
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1979	R 21/05/1981		
Optional Protocol to CEDAW, concerning individual complaints and inquiry procedures, 1999	R 05/03/2002		
Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), 1984	R 09/07/1986		Norway recognizes the competence of the Committee to receive and consider communications to the effect that a State Party claims that another State Party is not fulfilling its obligations under this Convention. Norway recognises the competence of the Committee to receive and consider communications from or on behalf of individuals subject to its jurisdiction who claim to be victims of a violation by a State Party of the provisions of the Convention.
Optional Protocol to CAT, concerning regular visits by national and international institutions to places of detention, 2002	R 27/06/2013		
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), 1989	R 08/01/1991		
Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict, 2000	R 23/09/2003		
Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child	R 02/10/2001		

Convention/ protocol	*Signature (S) Ratifications (R)*	*Reservations Declarations*	*Acceptance of optional procedures*
pornography, 2000			
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICMW), 1990	In 2002, Norway decided not to become party to the UN Convention on Migrant Rights in 2002, as the wording of the Convention was considered to be so vague and imprecise on a number of points that it would be difficult to clarify the consequences and obligations that ratification would entail. Norway was also concerned that the Convention could undermine existing obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The duplication of existing rights, to some extent with variations, could be unfortunate, since this could lead to ambiguity. Norway has already ratified all the key human rights instruments and the ILO core conventions on workers' rights. These also apply to foreign nationals resident in Norway. Norway participates actively in the UN and in various international forums where migrants' rights are on the agenda, for instance the Global Forum on Migration and Development. Norway gives high priority to efforts to improve labour standards, which are also crucial in the context of migrants' rights.		
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 2006	R 03/06/2013	Declarations: Article 12 "Norway recognises that persons with disabilities enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others in all aspects of life. Norway also recognizes its obligations to take appropriate measures to provide access by persons with disabilities to the support they may require in exercising their legal capacity. Furthermore, Norway declares its understanding that the Convention	

Convention/ protocol	*Signature (S) Ratifications (R)*	*Reservations Declarations*	*Acceptance of optional procedures*
		allows for the withdrawal of legal capacity or support in exercising legal capacity, and/or compulsory guardianship, in cases where such measures are necessary, as a last resort and subject to safeguards." Articles 14 and 25 "Norway recognises that all persons with disabilities enjoy the right to liberty and security of person, and a right to respect for physical and mental integrity on an equal basis with others. Furthermore, Norway declares its understanding that the Convention allows for compulsory care or treatment of persons, including measures to treat mental illnesses, when circumstances render treatment of this kind necessary as a last resort, and the treatment is subject to legal safeguards."	
International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CED), 2006	S 21/12/2007		

2. Other United Nations human rights and related conventions

93. The status of ratification is set out in the table below.

Convention/protocol	*Signature (S) Ratification (R) Accession (A)*
Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948	R 22/07/1949
Slavery Convention, 1926 as amended in 1955	R 11/04/1957
Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others, 1949	A 23/01/1952
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1951, and its 1967 Protocol	R 23/03/1953
Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, 1954	R 19/11/1956
Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, 1961	A 11/08/1971
Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 1998	R 16/02/2000
United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 2000, and its Protocols against the smuggling of migrants by land, sea and air, and to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children	R 23/09/2003
Arms Trade Treaty, 2013	S 03/06/2013

3. Conventions of the International Labour Organization (a selection)

94. The status of ratification is set out in the table below.

Convention/ protocol	*Signature (S) Ratification (R)*
Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921 (No. 14)	R 07/07/1937
Forced or Compulsory Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29)	R 01/07/1932
Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81)	R 05/01/1949
Migration for Employment Recommendation, 1949 (No. 86)	R 17/02/1955
Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)	R 04/07/1949
Migration for Employment Convention, 1949 (No. 97)	R 17/02/1955
Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)	R 17/02/1955
Equal Remuneration Convention 1951 (No. 100)	R 24/09/1959
Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102)	R 30/09/1954
Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)	R 14/04/1958
Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1957 (No. 106)	
Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)	R 24/09/1959
Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118)	R 28/08/1963
Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122)	R 06/06/1966
Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129)	R 14/04/1971
Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131)	
Holidays with Pay Convention (Revised), 1970 (No. 132)	R 22/06/1973
Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)	R 08/07/1980
Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)	R 24/01/1979
Migrant Workers Recommendation, 1975 (No. 151)	
Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151)	R 19/03/1980
Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)	R 22/06/1982
Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Men and Women Workers: Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156)	R 22/06/1982
Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries Convention, 1989 (No. 169)	R 19/06/1990
Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)	R 21/12/2000
Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183)	
Maritime Labour Convention, 2006	S 10/2/2009

4. Conventions of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

95. The status of ratification is set out in the table below.

Convention/ protocol	*Signature (S) Ratification (R)*
Convention against Discrimination in Education, 1960	R 08/01/1963

5. Conventions of the Hague Conference on Private International Law

96. The status of ratification is set out in the table below.

Convention/ protocol	*Signature (S) Ratification (R)*
Convention relating to the settlement of the conflicts between the law of nationality and the law of domicile, 1955	
Convention on the law applicable to maintenance obligations towards children, 1956	S 24/10/1956
Convention concerning the recognition and enforcement of decisions relating to maintenance obligations towards children, 1958	R 02/09/1965
Convention concerning the powers of authorities and the law applicable in respect of the protection of minors, 1961	
Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law and Recognition of Decrees Relating to Adoptions, 1965	
Convention on the Law Applicable to Maintenance Obligations, 1973	
Convention on the Recognition of Divorces and Legal Separations, 1970	R 15/08/1978
Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Decisions relating to Maintenance Obligations, 1973	R 12/04/1978
Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction, 1980	R 09/01/1989
Convention on Celebration and Recognition of the Validity of Marriages, 1978	
Convention on the Law Applicable to Matrimonial Property Regimes, 1978	
Convention on International Access to Justice, 1980	
Convention on the Law Applicable to Succession to the Estates of Deceased Persons, 1989	
Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption, 1993	R 25/09/1997
Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Co-operation in respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the Protection of Children, 1996	
Convention on the International Protection of Adults, 2002	

6. Geneva Conventions and other treaties on international humanitarian law

97. The status of ratification is set out in the table below.

Convention/ protocol	*Signature (S) Ratification (R)*
Geneva Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field, 1949	R 03/08/1951
Geneva Convention (II) for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea, 1949	R 03/08/1951
Geneva Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, 1949	R 03/08/1951
Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 1949	R 03/08/1951
Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 1977	R 14/12/1981
Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II), 1977	R 14/12/1981
Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, 1997	R 09/07/1998
Convention on Cluster Munitions 2008	R 03/12/2008

7. Regional human rights conventions

(a) Conventions of the Council of Europe (a selection)

98. The status of ratification is set out in the table below.

Convention/ protocol	*Signature (S) Ratification (R)*
Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms 1950 (Norway has also ratified additional Protocols Nos. 1, 4, 6, 7 and 13 to the Convention, and signed additional Protocol No. 12)	R 15/1/1952
European Social Charter (revised) 1996	R 07/05/2001
European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 1987	R 21/4/1989
European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages 1992	R 10/11/1993
Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities 1995	R 17/3/1999
Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime, concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems, 2003	R 29/04/2008

Convention/ protocol	*Signature (S) Ratification (R)*
Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, 2005	R 17/01/2008
Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, 2007	S 25/10/2007
Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents, 2009	R 11/09/2009
Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, 2007	S 25/10/2007
Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against woman and domestic violence, 2011	S 07/07/2011

B. Legal framework for the protection of human rights at the national level

1. Legislation

Introduction

99. Human rights are protected under the Constitution, the Human Rights Act and specific legislation in certain areas.

100. Norway is a dualist country. In order to be directly applicable in Norwegian law, international human rights conventions must therefore – in principle – be incorporated or transformed into Norwegian law. Incorporation means that the convention as such is incorporated into Norwegian law through specific provisions, for instance in the Human Rights Act. Transformation means that national legislation is worded so as to be in accordance with the convention. Transformation may be either active or passive. In active transformation the Storting implements new legislation or amends existing legislation in order to comply with the convention concerned, whereas in passive transformation the Storting considers that existing Norwegian legislation is already in accordance with the convention.

101. It is also a principle of general Norwegian law that Norwegian law should be interpreted in accordance with obligations in public international law that are binding on Norway. The principle is particularly strong with respect to international human rights obligations. The principle has been cited a number of times by the Norwegian Supreme Court.

102. In some areas of law sector monism applies, i.e. it is explicitly stated that provisions in a particular Act apply with the limitations that follow from public international law, including human rights. The Norwegian Civil Procedure Act and the General Civil Penal Code are examples of such legislation.

The Norwegian Constitution

103. The Norwegian Constitution, which was drawn up in 1814, is founded on the principles of the sovereignty of the people, the separation of powers and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Constitution of 1814 did not, however, contain a complete bill of rights, but specified those human rights and fundamental freedoms that were agreed on at the time. Articles relating to human rights have been added in recent

years. The Constitution also establishes a *general duty* for all public authorities to respect and safeguard human rights, including human rights that are not written into the Constitution.

Human Rights Committee appointed by the Storting

104. On 19 December 2011 the Human Rights Committee appointed by the Storting presented its report with proposals on strengthening human rights in the Constitution. The report included several proposed amendments to the Constitution, relating to civil and political rights, economic, social and cultural rights, as well as securing children's rights in the Constitution.

105. All of the proposals from the report were put forward in the Storting by different groups of elected representatives consisting of members of all parties represented in the Storting. The proposals are to be discussed and decisions taken during the first three sessions of the Storting after the parliamentary election in 2013.

The Human Rights Act of 21 May 1999

106. Under the Human Rights Act of 21 May 1999, the following conventions have been incorporated into Norwegian law:

- The Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of 4 November 1950 with later amendments, including the following additional protocols:
    - Protocol No. 1, 20 March 1952;
    - Protocol No. 4, 16 September 1963, securing certain rights and freedoms other than those already included in the Convention and in the First Protocol thereto;
    - Protocol No. 6, 28 April 1983, Concerning the Abolition of the Death Penalty;
    - Protocol No. 7, 22 November 1984;
    - Protocol No. 13, 21 February 2002, Concerning the Abolition of the Death Penalty;
- The United Nations International Covenant 16 December 1966, on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- The United Nations International Covenant, 16 December 1966, on Civil and Political Rights, including the following additional protocols:
    - Optional Protocol, 16 December 1966;
    - Second Optional Protocol, 15 December 1989 Aiming at the Abolition of the Death Penalty;
- The United Nations International Convention, 20 November 1989, on the Rights of the Child, including the following additional protocols:
    - Optional Protocol, 25 May 2000, on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict;
    - Optional Protocol, 25 May 2000, on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography;
- The United Nations International Convention, 18 December 1979, on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including the Optional

Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 6 October 1999.

Other legislation

107. A number of other conventions relating to human rights have also been incorporated or transformed into Norwegian law. For instance, the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination has been incorporated into Norwegian law through Section 2 of the Discrimination Act of 3 June 2005 and the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment has been transformed into Norwegian law through the Penal Code.

2. Competencies of judicial, administrative and other public authorities concerning human rights

108. All public authorities are obliged to respect and secure human rights obligations whether they stem from the Constitution, Norwegian law or international conventions that are binding on Norway, cf. Article 110 c of the Norwegian Constitution. Some public authorities have a more general responsibility; for example, the Norwegian Minister of Justice is responsible for the Human Rights Act and the Parliamentary Ombudsman has a duty to help ensure that all public authorities respect and secure human rights.

3. Remedies

109. There are many ways in which a question of human rights may be brought before a Norwegian court or administrative authority, for example in connection with a civil claim or civil or penal proceedings such as a claim for compensation, as a ground for declaring an administrative or a court decision null and void, or as a question of procedure (for example a fair trial) in civil or penal proceedings. Furthermore an individual who considers that his human rights have been violated may, subject to the ordinary limitations in the Civil Procedure Act, demand that any court pass a judgment on the case.

110. Several public authorities and complaint mechanisms address human rights issues more specifically. On a more general level an individual has the right to submit a complaint to the Parliamentary Ombudsman concerning an alleged injustice – including human rights violations – committed by any public authority. The Ombudsman may point out that an error or negligence has been committed by the public authority. He may also point out that the decision is clearly unreasonable or contrary to good administrative practice. If he finds sufficient grounds, he may recommend that compensation should be awarded. The opinion of the Ombudsman is not legally binding, but in practice it is normally followed.

4. The European Court of Human Rights and other international individual complaint mechanisms

111. At the regional level, Norway has ratified the European Convention on Human Rights and accepted the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights. Within the framework of the United Nations, Norway has also accepted the jurisdiction of several other complaint mechanisms.[10]

[10] For example the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment Article 22 and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination Article 14.

C. Framework within which human rights are promoted at the national level

1. Introduction

112. The paramount objective of a constitutional government is to protect individuals against abuse of power and arbitrary treatment by public authorities and to ensure equal treatment, welfare and democracy. Both the government and the public administration at national, regional and local levels are bound by Norway's human rights obligations in the exercise of their authority. The same applies to the Storting and the judiciary. The implementation of human rights instruments in Norwegian law and their status within the legal system is described above.

113. The judiciary is independent of the executive and the legislature, and has the power to review the constitutionality of acts passed by the Storting and whether legislation is compatible with Norway's human rights obligations. It may also review administrative decisions.[11] Administrative decisions may also be appealed to a higher administrative level and complaints concerning administrative decisions may be submitted to the Parliamentary Ombudsman.[12]

114. Responsibility for national implementation of human rights obligations is divided between the ministries, which are all responsible for following up the recommendations of various treaty bodies within their sectors. Human rights are integrated and mainstreamed into all sectors of government and administration. All ministries and administrative bodies have an obligation to take human rights into account when drafting legislation, drawing up guidelines for administrative practice and adopting decisions.

115. The Ministry of Justice nevertheless has a particular responsibility to ensure that Norwegian law and administrative practice are consistent with Norway's human rights obligations. The Ministry of Justice revises draft legislation in order to assess its compatibility with the Constitution and international human rights obligations. The Ministry of Justice also provides advice to other ministries and government bodies on the interpretation of human rights standards in relation to sector legislation and administrative practice.

2. The Storting (the Norwegian Parliament)

116. Under the Norwegian parliamentary system, the Government is accountable to the Storting, which exercises continuous control over the Government's activities, including the protection and promotion of human rights.

117. In the Storting, as in all the government structures, human rights are mainstreamed and taken into account by each committee and by the plenary when passing legislation and adopting decisions. The Storting has no separate body such as a human rights committee.

118. The Parliamentary Ombudsman plays an important role in supervising, on behalf of the Storting, compliance with international human rights standards by the public administration.

3. County and municipal authorities

119. Norway has a two-tier system of local government, consisting of 19 counties and 428 municipalities (2013). The county and municipal authorities have the same

[11] See section D above.
[12] See below.

administrative status, while central government has the overriding authority and supervision of county and municipal administration. The main representative of central government that supervises the local authorities is the county governor.

120. The Local Government Act of 25 September 1992 No. 107[13] sets out the basic principles for the organisation of the county and municipal authorities, their work and their relations with supervisory government bodies. On the whole the rules are the same for counties and municipalities. The Act is currently being revised. One of the main aims of the revision is to strengthen local self-government.

121. The Local Government Act does not regulate which duties are to be carried out locally. Separate provisions cover these questions. The current division of responsibility for some of the main services is as follows:

- Central government's responsibilities:
    - The National Insurance Scheme;
    - Specialised health services (hospitals, etc.);
    - Higher education/universities, labour market, refugees and immigrants;
    - National road network, railways, agricultural issues, environmental issues;
    - Police, courts, prisons, armed forces, foreign policy;
    - Specialised social services;
- The county authorities' responsibilities:
    - Upper secondary school;
    - Regional development;
    - County roads and public transport;
    - Regional planning;
    - Business development;
    - Culture (museums, libraries, sports);
    - Cultural heritage;
    - Environmental issues;
- The municipalities' responsibilities:
    - Primary and lower secondary school;
    - Nurseries/kindergartens;
    - Primary health care;
    - Care of the elderly and disabled, social services;
    - Local planning (land use), agricultural issues, environmental issues, local roads, harbours;
    - Water supply, sanitation and sewer.

122. In accordance with the principle of local autonomy, it is up to each local authority to organise its work as it deems best, but as on central government level, the promotion and

[13] http://www.regjeringen.no/en/doc/Laws/Acts/Local-Government-Act.html?id=439600.

protection of human rights must be taken into account by all local authorities in their areas of responsibility.

123. In order to ensure the rights of citizens and the legality of adopted decisions, county and municipal authorities are subject to state supervision and control.

124. The main representative of central government who supervises the local authorities is the county governor. According to section 59 of the Local Government Act, the county governor reviews the legality of county and municipal decisions, either upon the request of at least three of the members of the county or municipal council or ex officio. The county governor also deals with appeals from the public over certain county and municipal decisions on the basis of legislation in the sector concerned.

125. The county governor serves as a guardian of civic rights. He may review county or municipal decisions regarding the rights of any individual in the fields of health and social welfare, education, and building and planning, and may reverse the decision to the benefit of the individual.

126. In some areas, sector legislation confers central control of counties and municipalities to bodies with specific competence in the area in question. Examples are the Board of Health, which supervises the local authorities in the area of health services, and the County Social Welfare Board, which reviews certain administrative decisions under the Child Welfare Act.[14]

4. National human rights institutions

The Norwegian Centre for Human Rights

127. Since 2001, Norway's national institution for human rights has been the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights (NCHR). The NCHR is organised as a multi-disciplinary centre under the Faculty of Law at the University of Oslo. It is part of an international network of national institutions for human rights.

128. In March 2013 the University's board decided that NCHR would, no later than 30 June 2014, cease to function as Norway's national institution for human rights.

129. In November 2012, the ICC Sub-Committee recommended that the accreditation of the Norwegian national institution should be downgraded from A to B status.

130. On this basis, the Government established an inter-ministerial working group to consider changes to Norway's national institution for human rights, including the creation of a new national institution with another organisation and structure. The working group started its activities in 2012 and has held broad consultation both nationally and internationally. Based on the working group's evaluations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepared a consultative paper that was circulated for review to a wide range of stakeholders in June 2013. The decision on the structure and mandate of the new national institution will be based on this process.

The Parliamentary Ombudsman

131. The ombudsman institutions play a key role in monitoring the Norwegian authorities' fulfilment of their human rights obligations. The Parliamentary Ombudsman for the Public Administration was established in 1962, and the terms of reference for this office are to deal with complaints from citizens concerning an injustice perpetrated by the public

[14] http://www.regjeringen.no/en/doc/Laws/Acts/the-child-welfare-act.html?id=448398.

administration at any of the three levels: government, county or municipal. The Ombudsman may also raise an issue on his own initiative.

132. The functions of the Parliamentary Ombudsman are set out in the Constitution, in section 75, litra l, of the Act of 22 June 1962 No. 8 relating to the Parliamentary Ombudsman for the Public Administration[15] and in the Instructions of 19 February 1980 No. 9862 to the Parliamentary Ombudsman for the Public Administration. The Ombudsman is appointed by and administratively subordinate to the Storting, but acts as an independent body in the exercise of his functions.

133. In 2007 the Parliamentary Ombudsman Act was amended in order to strengthen the human rights mandate of the Parliamentary Ombudsman. According to the amended Section 3 of the Act, the Ombudsman shall: "seek to ensure that individual citizens are not unjustly treated by public authorities and help to ensure that public authorities respect and protect human rights."

134. In 2013, the Ombudsman was also appointed as the national preventive mechanism for the prevention of torture at the domestic level, in compliance with the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture.

135. The Ombudsman's opinions are not legally binding on the public authorities, but they are widely respected and followed. The opinions are published on the website and in the Yearbook of the Parliamentary Ombudsman for the Public Administration.

The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal

136. Concerning the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, reference is made to §212–215. Concerning the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal reference is made to §216–221.

The Ombudsman for Children

137. In 1981 Norway established the world's first Ombudsman for Children.[16] The Ombudsman's main tasks are to promote the rights of children in the public and private sectors and to monitor the development of children's living conditions. The Ombudsman also monitors the compliance of Norwegian legislation and practice with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and submits its own supplementary reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

138. The Ombudsman for Children is independent of the Storting, the Government and other public authorities, and may freely raise issues and criticise government policy. The Ombudsman has the power to investigate, criticise and publicise issues that will improve the welfare of children and youth, and may demand access to case files and official documents in order to fulfil this function. However, the Ombudsman cannot reverse an administrative action or decision. There is no formal complaints mechanism such as those for complaints to the Parliamentary Ombudsman or the Equality and Anti-discrimination Ombud, but the Ombudsman for Children may raise issues on his own initiative, and address his opinions and recommendations to any public authority.

[15] The English translation of the Act including amendments up to 2004, but not the 2007 amendment, can be found at http://www.ub.uio.no/cgi-bin/ujur/ulov/sok.cgi.

[16] Act 6 March 1981 No. 5 relating to the Ombudsman for Children, http://www.barneombudet.no/english/about_the_/law_and_in/.

Other ombudsman institutions

139. The terms of reference of the **patient ombudsmen** are to safeguard patients' needs, interests and legal rights in the health services, and to improve the quality of such services. There is one patient ombudsman in each of the 19 counties, and their powers and terms of reference are set out in Chapter 8 of the Act of 2 July 1999 No. 63 relating to patients' rights.

140. Any individual who claims that his or her rights or interests have been violated by the county/regional specialist care service or by the municipal primary health care service, may address a complaint to the Patient Ombudsman. The ombudsman may give his views on the matter and propose actions and improvements, but his views are not legally binding.

141. The **Ombudsman for the Armed Forces** deals with a number of cases involving human rights, such as the right to privacy, freedom of expression and freedom of religion.

142. **Other ombudsman institutions** have been established in some counties and municipalities, such as an ombudsman for the elderly and for social services. These ombudsmen may also play an important role in monitoring the authorities' observance of human rights and in raising awareness among government employees and the general public.

5. Dissemination of human rights instruments

143. The core UN human rights conventions ratified by Norway have all been translated into Norwegian. The conventions that are incorporated into Norwegian law in the form of the Human Rights Act and other acts are published in Norwegian and English on the legal information database Lovdata: www.lovdata.no. The conventions are also published on the government website: www.regjeringen.no, and on the websites of the individual ombudsman institutions. Hard copies may be obtained from all these agencies and institutions on request.

144. Some of the core human rights instruments have also been published in brochures and widely distributed. For example, a short version of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, translated into Norwegian and Sami, has been distributed to all primary schools in Norway. In addition, Norwegian translations of the Council of Europe's *Charter on Human Rights Education and Democratic Citizenship* and the *UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training* were provided in 2011 and 2012, respectively. Both documents are available on the Internet.

145. Summaries in Norwegian of judgments by the European Court of Human Rights, which are categorised as judgments of high importance by the Court, and decisions in cases where Norway is party are published on Lovdata. Lovdata also publishes Norwegian summaries of the decisions and opinions of the monitoring bodies under the UN human rights system in individual cases where Norway is a party and in certain cases concerning other states.

6. Raising human rights awareness among public officials and other professionals

146. National curriculum regulations have been drawn up for teacher training and for professional training in the health and social services sector, and human rights have been included as an obligatory component in these training programmes. Knowledge about human rights is also included in the curricula for other professions, such as lawyers, police and prison wardens. Universities and university colleges are by law autonomous institutions. This is to ensure academic freedom. In principle the government is therefore not in a position to impose specific requirements on these institutions regarding the content

of teaching or research, but it may and does lay down a national curriculum for certain types of training and certain subjects, as mentioned above.

147. Further education programmes for public officials are organised by the government and other public authorities, and by professional and other civil society organisations.

7. Promotion of human rights awareness through educational programmes and Government-sponsored public information

148. Including human rights education in all levels of the education system has high priority in Norway. In 2008 the Storting decided to amend the purpose clauses for day-care institutions and primary and secondary schools, and the amendments to the Education Act, which regulates primary and secondary education, entered into force in January 2009.

Kindergartens

149. According to the purpose clause, kindergartens should, in cooperation with the parents, ensure that children's need for care and play is met, and promote their holistic development. Kindergartens must base their activities on the fundamental values of the Christian and humanist heritage, which are also those inherent in human rights, such as respect for human dignity, intellectual freedom, charity, forgiveness, equality and solidarity.

150. The curriculum for the content and tasks of kindergartens laid down by the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research in 2006 has similar objectives. Thus kindergartens should base their activities on a common set of values such as human worth, equality, honesty and fairness, and these values should be taught in accordance with the human rights conventions to which Norway is a party. International conventions and Norwegian law both emphasise the right of parents to bring up their children in accordance with their religion and ideological beliefs and the right of children to learn about the society in which they are growing up.

Primary and secondary education

151. The amended purpose clause for education and training entered into force in January 2009. Ever since the first objectives for state schools were decided in 1848 and until 2008, the purpose clauses have been amended primarily by adding new objectives and without changing the core principle of Christian and moral upbringing. The objectives in the present Education Act are a clear break with this tradition, as they are based on fundamental human rights, and take account of the fact that while Norwegian society has its own cultural tradition it is also marked by cultural diversity.

152. The purpose clause states that "Education and training shall be based on fundamental values in Christian and humanist heritage and traditions, such as respect for human dignity and nature, on intellectual freedom, charity, forgiveness, equality and solidarity, values that also appear in different religions and beliefs and are rooted in human rights." It also states that education and training should provide insight into cultural diversity, respect the individual's convictions, and promote democracy, equality and scientific thinking. Pupils and apprentices are to learn to think critically and act ethically and to have joint responsibility and the right to participate. Furthermore all forms of discrimination are to be combated.

153. Human rights are also integrated in the compulsory subject curricula for primary and secondary education. In social studies subjects, the children are expected to have acquired various competencies concerning human rights by the end of grades 4, 7, 10 and 11/12. This is also included in the teaching of the subject religion, philosophies of life and ethics. A special subject (140 lessons), entitled human rights and politics, is offered as an elective

for pupils in grade 12 of the general studies programme, and human rights are also incorporated in the optional subjects of sociology and law.

The European Wergeland Centre

154. In cooperation with the Council of Europe, Norway has established a resource centre on education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship. The European Wergeland Centre (EWC), named after the Norwegian poet, Henrik Wergeland (1808–1845), has been operative since 2009. The centre aims to be a resource for all member states of the Council of Europe. It will build on and promote the values and goals shared by the Council of Europe and Norway.

155. Education is seen as a key factor to creating living democracies in Europe. The main task of the EWC is to promote democratic culture and social belonging through education. The centre shall contribute through relevant projects and activities in cooperation with the Council of Europe. An important element in the work of the centre is to maintain an accessible and informative web site, which can serve as an online hub and through this create a network for actors in the field. The target groups are teachers, teacher-training professionals, scientists, practitioners, policy-makers and other relevant actors.

Gáldu – Resource Centre for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

156. The Gáldu Resource Centre for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was established in 2002 with the aim of increasing general knowledge about and understanding of Sami and indigenous rights. The principal activity consists of collecting, adapting and distributing relevant information and documentation regarding indigenous rights in Norway and abroad. The centre is targeted towards seekers of knowledge about indigenous rights, including schools, voluntary organisations, public institutions and authorities. The Centre is independent, governed by its own board, and funded by the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

8. Promotion of human rights awareness through the media

157. Freedom of expression and of the press is guaranteed both through international human rights instruments and in the Norwegian Constitution. The press and other mass media regularly highlight important human rights issues in Norway and play a vital role in facilitating public debate on these questions. Civil society organisations also make use of the media to put human rights issues on the public agenda.

9. Role of civil society, including non-governmental organisations

158. Civil society, including human rights defenders, plays a key role in the realisation of human rights in Norway and has laid much of the foundation for democracy and welfare in Norwegian society. NGOs promote diversity, disseminate knowledge, stimulate debate on policies and priorities, contribute proposals to public consultations, engage in voluntary work and promote social cohesion. In many cases matters have been placed on the agenda as a result of initiatives taken by civil society stakeholders.

159. Norway has always had a strong civil society. More than half of the adult population of Norway is active in one or more organisations, in fields such as nature conservation, sport, religion, human rights, development cooperation, culture, the trade unions and trade and industry organisations. In Norway a high rate of participation in NGOs is perceived as an indicator of a good society characterised by diversity, community and civic engagement. The Government wishes to involve a broad cross-section of society in the efforts to promote human rights and support and facilitate voluntary engagement and the development of a vibrant civil society. The state's provision of public funding for NGOs

without imposing guidelines for their activities is an important means of achieving this objective. The Government also organises regular meetings with human rights organisations, and all draft legislation is subject to a broad consultation process that includes human rights organisations, which often provide valuable input and are able to influence government policy.

160. A number of Norwegian civil society organisations that focus on human rights have created a network, the NGO Forum for Human Rights, through which they share information and coordinate their efforts. A similar network has been established specifically for children's rights, the Forum for the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which has a membership of more than 50 institutions and NGOs.

10. Budget allocations and trends

161. As discussed in the introduction, human rights are mainstreamed in all areas of national public administration. Funding for human rights is therefore not specifically allocated in the national budget, but appears under a wide range of items, such as education, health and care, social welfare and courts administration.

11. Development cooperation and assistance

162. Norway has an established target of assigning 1 per cent of GNI (gross national income) to development assistance. The ratio was 0.93 per cent for 2012, a slight reduction from previous years. Human rights is one of the priority areas for Norwegian development cooperation, together with the environment and sustainable development, peace-building, humanitarian assistance, oil and clean energy, women and gender equality, good governance, the fight against corruption, and the efforts to reach the health-related Millennium Development Goals.

163. Out of the total budget of NOK 30.2 billion for international development assistance in 2013, NOK 337.1 million has been allocated under the item "human rights".

D. Reporting process at the national level

1. The United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

164. In November 2012 Norway was examined before the UN Committee against Torture in Geneva for its sixth and seventh State Report under the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, delivered in 2011. The Committee has requested that Norway provides, by 23 November 2013, the follow-up information to the Committee's recommendations. The next State Report is due in 2016.

2. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

165. In October 2011 Norway was examined before the United Nations Human Rights Committee in Geneva for its sixth State report under the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, delivered in 2009. The Committee's last follow-up questions after the examination were responded to by the Norwegian Government in June 2013. The next State Report is due in 2016.

3. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

166. In January 2010 Norway was examined before the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child for its fourth State Report under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The CRC Committee submitted its concluding observations to Norway on 29 January 2010.

167. In 2011, the Government drew up a report which sums up the status and follow-up of the concluding observations. In light of the concluding observations, there has been an increase in grants and new laws have been adopted. Regulations and directives have been carried out and knowledge about the CRC has been developed. There have been regular meetings between contact persons in the relevant ministries, as well as with NGOs, to discuss challenges connected with the implementation of the CRC and the follow-up of the CRC Committee's concluding observations from 2010. Norway will submit its fifth and sixth report to the CRC Committee in 2016.

4. The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

168. In September 2010 Norway submitted its eighth periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion coordinated the Government's report. Consultations were held with a number of women's and gender equality organisations, human rights organisations, the social partners and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud. The responses were incorporated into the Government's final report, which was distributed to all stakeholders. Norway was examined by CEDAW on 16 February 2012 and received the committee's concluding observations 8 March 2012. Norway is currently working on the follow-up of the concluding observations. Norway's next periodic report to CEDAW is due in February 2016.

5. The United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD)

169. The reporting process to CERD is similar to that of the CRC and CEDAW, with several ministries contributing to the Government's report. The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion is responsible for coordinating activities. Norway's 21st/22nd periodic report was submitted in September 2013. A broad range of organisations have been invited to submit written comments to the draft report, and all the relevant documents have been published on the ministry's website. The draft report has been forwarded to Sámediggi for comment.

6. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

170. Norway's fifth periodic report was submitted on 28 June 2010. It was prepared in accordance with the treaty-specific guidelines (E/C.12/2008/2) which take into account the harmonised guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties (HRI/GEN/2) and the evolving practice of the Committee in relation to the application of the Covenant, as reflected in its concluding observations, general comments and statements.

171. A preparatory inter-ministerial meeting of more than ten participating ministries was held under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Civil society involvement and a transparent governmental process are considered vital to the content of the report. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has published all the relevant documents pertaining to the reporting process on the government website in order to facilitate NGO participation in the process. Two open consultation meetings for civil society have been held so far, and civil society has submitted contributions to the Committee. Norway's report and the ICESCR's concluding observations will be forwarded to the relevant governmental and non-governmental bodies and organisations, and published on the government website.

7. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

172. Norway ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 3 June 2013. EU regulations and directives and Council of Europe resolutions and recommendations relating to people with disabilities are being followed up.

III. Information on non-discrimination and equality, and effective remedies

A. Protection against discrimination – Introduction to the Norwegian legal framework

173. Provisions relating to protection against discrimination on the grounds of personal qualities or opinions are currently to be found in a number of different acts. On 13 June 2013, the Storting adopted four new equality and anti-discrimination acts. One was a new act prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. In addition, a new Gender Equality Act (replacing the Gender Equality Act of 1978), a new act prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity and religion (replacing the Anti-Discrimination Act of 2005) and a new act prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of disability (replacing the Anti-Discrimination and Accessibility Act of 2008) were adopted. Extensive changes have been made to the structure and language of these acts, and they were therefore adopted as new acts. The four new equality and anti-discrimination acts will enter into force on 1 January 2014.

174. These four equality and anti-discrimination acts will in principle apply to all areas of society. Chapter 13 of the Working Environment Act prohibits discrimination in employment relationships on the basis of political views, membership of an employee organisation, sexual orientation, age, or temporary or part-time employment. Discrimination on the grounds of gender, ethnicity, religion, belief, disability, sexual orientation or gender expression is also prohibited in the housing legislation.

175. Direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and instructions to discriminate against an individual on the basis of the above-mentioned grounds are prohibited. The anti-discrimination legislation also contains provisions for the protection of a person who brings a suit for discrimination from being subjected to unfavourable treatment (reprisals), on account of his or her action, and the acts also cover being an accessory to discrimination. The acts have a general provision for justified unequal treatment. The conditions are that the unequal treatment has a just cause, that it is necessary and that it does not disproportionately negatively affect the person or persons subject to the unequal treatment.

176. All the new acts will introduce a shared burden of proof and civil law sanctions for violations of the prohibition in the form of compensation for economic and non-economic loss. A special enforcement mechanism will also be established to supervise and assist in the implementation of the act, see below. Decisions regarding compensation for economic and non-economic loss must be made by a court of law.

177. The anti-discrimination legislation is enforced by two bodies, the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal, which were established on 1 January 2006. Both are independent agencies administratively subordinate to the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion. The Ombud's opinion may be appealed to the Tribunal.

178. The Penal Code also provides for protection under criminal law against discrimination and hateful expressions.

1. The Gender Equality Act

179. The Gender Equality Act provides the framework for all efforts to promote gender equality in Norway. Its purpose is to promote equality irrespective of gender. It prohibits all discrimination on grounds of gender, but is particularly aimed at strengthening the position of women. It applies in all areas of society. As well as being an important guarantee against discrimination, the Act provides a basis for proactive measures.

180. The Act requires public authorities, employers and employer and employee organisations to work actively and systematically to promote gender equality. It also requires employers to report annually on the gender equality status and activities in their enterprises.

181. The Act enables authorities and others to introduce special measures for one gender for a limited period of time in order to promote gender equality. The provision in the Act concerning representation of both genders on official committees, etc. has played an important role in promoting women's participation in public governance and has served as a precursor to similar provisions relating to representation on boards of directors of limited companies, etc.

2. The Act on prohibition of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity and religion

182. The Act prohibits discrimination based on ethnicity, religion or belief. Its objective is to promote equality irrespective of ethnicity, religion or belief. It applies in all areas of society except for family life and personal relationships.

183. The Act contains a separate penal provision for serious contraventions of the prohibition against discrimination that are committed jointly by several persons. The penalty is fines or imprisonment for up to three years. A person who has previously been sentenced for contravention of this provision may be sentenced even if the contravention is not serious.

184. The Act meets the requirements set out in EU Council Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, and EU Council Directive 2000/78/EF establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation.

185. The Act requires public authorities, employers and employer and employee organisations to work actively and systematically to promote equality on the basis of ethnicity. Employers must report annually on activities planned and taken. To ensure that small private enterprises are not required to comply with excessively stringent requirements, this duty is limited to enterprises that regularly employ more than fifty people.

3. The Anti-Discrimination and Accessibility Act

186. The Anti-Discrimination and Accessibility Act contains provisions on discrimination on accessibility. These are closely linked in the sense that a breach of the provisions relating to accessibility may constitute discrimination. On the other hand, discrimination on the basis of disability may take place without any contravention of the accessibility provisions.

187. The objectives of the Act are to promote equality irrespective of disability. The Act is intended to help dismantle disabling barriers created by society and to prevent new ones from being created. The Act applies in all areas of society, except for family life and personal relationships. In addition to the prohibition against discrimination, there are provisions setting out a duty of general accommodation (universal design) and individual accommodation.

188. Universal design is used to mean designing or accommodating the main physical features of the undertaking in such a way that the normal function of the undertaking can be utilised by as many people as possible. This duty applies to undertakings that offer goods and services to the general public. Universal design therefore ensures not only accessibility but also accessibility on equal terms. In addition to persons with disabilities, pregnant women, parents with young children and many elderly people benefit from greater accessibility in the form of a universally designed society. However, in some cases general accommodation requirements are not enough to ensure accessibility for all persons with disabilities.

189. Where universal design does not benefit everyone, the Act also has a duty to provide individual accommodation in the areas of working life, schools and education, day-care institutions and certain municipal services.

190. The Act requires public authorities, employers and employer and employee organisations to work actively and systematically to promote equality on the basis of disability. Employers must report annually on activities planned and taken. For private companies the duty is limited to companies with more than fifty employees.

191. Like the other equality and anti-discrimination acts, the Act is enforced by the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud and the Tribunal. The time limits for the universal design of ICT (information and communications technology) are enforced by the Agency for Public Management and eGovernment (DIFI).

4. The Act on prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression

192. Prior to 1 January 2014, there is a prohibition on discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation in working life and in the housing market. A prohibition against discriminating on the grounds of transsexuality follows from the Gender Equality Act. With the new Act that will enter into force 1 January 2014, discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression will be prohibited in all areas of society and all transsexual persons will be protected from discrimination.

193. The Act follows the same structure as the other anti-discrimination acts. It contains a duty for public authorities, employers and employer and employee organisations to work actively and systematically to promote equality on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression. Employers must report annually on activities planned and taken. For private companies the duty is limited to companies with more than fifty employees.

5. The Working Environment Act (Chapter 13)

194. Chapter 13 of the Working Environment Act prohibits discrimination in employment relationships on the basis of political views, membership of an employee organisation, sexual orientation, age, or temporary or part-time employment. According to the scope of anti-discrimination, Chapter 13 applies to all aspects of employment and to the employer's selection and treatment of self-employed persons and contract workers.

6 The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud

195. The office of the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud was established on 1 January 2006. It is an independent body administratively subordinate to the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion. The ministry cannot instruct the Ombud with respect to the processing of individual cases or the Ombud's other professional activities. Nor can the ministry amend the Ombud's decisions.

196. The Ombud's task is to combat discrimination and promote equality regardless of factors such as gender, ethnicity, religion, belief, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or age. The Ombud enforces the acts mentioned in §196-210 and Chapter 13 of the Working Environment Act with exception for discrimination on the basis of temporary and part-time employment. The Ombud also enforces the anti-discrimination provisions in the housing acts (the Tenancy Act, the House-Building Cooperatives Act, the Housing Cooperatives Act and Property Unit Ownership Act). The Ombud must also ensure that Norwegian law and administrative practices are in conformity with Norway's obligations pursuant to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

197. The law enforcement role of the Ombud entails issuing statements in response to complaints about violations of the legislation within the Ombud's sphere of work. Any person who believes that he or she has been discriminated against may submit the case to the Ombud, who carries out an objective assessment of the case and issues a statement. A statement by the Ombud may be appealed to the independent Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal.

198. The Ombud's promotional role involves promoting equality and preventing discrimination in society as a whole. Among other things, this entails identifying and drawing attention to factors that hinder equality and equal treatment, raising awareness and educating the public, providing general information and guidance, advising employers on ethnic diversity in working life, and monitoring the nature and extent of discrimination.

7. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal

199. The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Tribunal was established by law on 1 January 2006 and enforces the legislation relating to equality and anti-discrimination mentioned in §196-211.

200. The Tribunal receives government funding but functions as an independent body that is not subject to instruction by the Government. The Tribunal is accessible to the general public and its services are free of charge.

201. Only the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud is competent to investigate alleged non-compliance with the law. A statement issued by the Ombud may be appealed to the Tribunal, and the Tribunal may only consider the case after the Ombud has issued a statement.

202. The decisions of the Tribunal are administratively binding, but may be overruled by a court of law. The Tribunal may impose a coercive fine to ensure compliance.

203. As regards administrative decisions made by municipal and state institutions, the powers of the Tribunal are more limited. In such cases the Tribunal may only issue recommendations.

204. On 1 January 2014 changes in the organisation of the Tribunal will enter into force in order to make the Tribunal more efficient. The chair and deputy chair will no longer participate in both divisions, and additional members and substitute members will be appointed. The Tribunal will consist of ten members and six substitute members appointed by the Government. When cases are being considered the members will be divided into two divisions with five members each. Most of the members are lawyers.

8. Ratification of Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

205. The Protocol was signed by Norway on 15 January 2003, and the Commission to propose more comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation has considered whether Norway should ratify it.

206. The majority of the Commission's members recommended that Norway should not ratify the Protocol. They placed special emphasis on the high degree of uncertainty regarding the obligations undertaken by a state on ratification and regarding how the very broadly formulated wording in article 1 of the Protocol will be interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights. The majority also emphasised the fact that ratification of the Protocol would entail greater protection against discrimination for legal entities and that this does not lie within the core area of the prohibition against discrimination under human rights law. The minority of the Commission recommended ratifying the Protocol. They pointed out that the Protocol does not entail any new obligations for Norway, it only entails new procedural benefits for victims of discrimination. The minority also pointed out that article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights already provides protection against discrimination for legal entities. Furthermore, the minority considered it unlikely that protection against discrimination will be interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights as introducing a general requirement of just cause that is independent of the grounds for discrimination. The Government has not concluded on whether the Protocol will be ratified.

B. Organization of the Government's efforts to promote equal rights and prevent discrimination

207. In 2007 the overall responsibility for coordinating Norway's efforts to promote equal rights and prevent discrimination was assigned to the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion. The ministry administers the acts mentioned in §196-211. Unifying the administration of the various acts under one ministry is a step in the Government's long-term efforts to combat discrimination, as it makes it easier to view the various forms of discrimination in relation to one another.

208. The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion plays a leading role in the efforts to promote an equal rights perspective in all policy areas and at all administrative levels. However, each ministry is responsible for promoting equal rights and preventing discrimination within its sector, in accordance with the principle of sector responsibility. Over the last few years, the competence of the Directorate of Children, Youth and Family Affairs has been strengthened in the field of equality and anti-discrimination, and some operational tasks have been delegated from the ministry to the directorate.

1. Gender equality

209. The Norwegian Gender Equality Act prohibits discrimination on grounds of gender in all areas of society.

210. In Norway today, almost as many women as men have completed higher education. Welfare benefits such as paid parental leave, flexible working hours and well-developed childcare facilities have made it easier to combine family life with paid employment. However, conditions for women and men in working life still differ. For example, far more women work part-time and, adjusted for working hours, women's average monthly pay is approximately 86.5 per cent of men's.

211. In order to achieve gender equality both in the workplace and at home, it is important for fathers to take a larger share of responsibility for childcare and family life. Since the introduction of parental leave earmarked for fathers, an increasing proportion of fathers have taken a greater share of parental leave. From 1 July 2013, 14 weeks of parental leave are earmarked for fathers. Fourteen weeks are similarly earmarked for mothers. It is up to the parents to decide how to share the rest of the period between them. The total period is 49 weeks with 100 per cent pay or 59 weeks with 80 per cent pay.

212. In 2003, it was decided that Norway would be the first country in the world to require balanced gender representation on the boards of public limited companies. This means that the boards of private and public companies must include a minimum of 40 per cent of each gender. On 1 July 2008, 40 per cent of board members were women. Overall, the figure has risen from approximately 7 per cent in 2003 to approximately 44 per cent in 2009.

2. Equal rights for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people

213. There have been significant developments in gay and lesbian rights in Norway over the last few years. Under the amended Marriage Act (Act of 4 July 1991 No. 47), which entered into force on 1 January 2009, same-sex couples are entitled to get married. Registered partners may also apply for their partnership to be legally recognised as a marriage. Same-sex couples have the same rights as others to adopt children. Lesbian couples are also entitled to IVF treatment. The Act on prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression will enter into force 1 January 2014.

214. The LGBT Government action plan 2009–2012, "Improving the quality of life for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people", has been extended through 2013. The national LGBT Centre evaluated the implementation and impact of the measures in this plan in May 2013. The conclusion, based on input from actors from civil society, ministries and relevant service providers, is that the plan has set a new standard for this field of government policy – through its clear visions and goals and the subsequent ambitious set of measures across sectors. For example, the plan has secured stronger support and core funding both for the existing LGBT NGOs and for the establishment and development of "Skeiv Verden" ("Queer World"), an organisation for LGBT persons with immigrant background. From being completely invisible only a few years ago, Skeiv Verden now provides a safe environment where LGBT immigrants can meet others who are in a similar situation. Skeiv Verden also has strong spokespersons who now give this group a very important voice in the public debate. As another example, the improvement of LGBT rights and related law and policies has over the last few years become one of the topics Norwegian politicians and officials usually insist on including on the agenda for bilateral and multilateral dialogue and cooperation. Another important milestone was passed in 2011, when the national LGBT Knowledge Centre was established under the Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion. A number of important research and data collection projects have also been finalised as part of the implementation of the present Government LGBT Action Plan. The findings from these projects will be used as a foundation for the further development of the national LGBT policies.

215. From 2011 until 2013 Norway supported the Council of Europe LGBT project, both with a seconded project manager through the first year of the project and with project funding throughout the project period. The project aims to support the implementation of CM/Rec 2010/5, the Council of Europe LGBT recommendation, in six states (Montenegro, Albania, Italy, Poland, Latvia and Serbia).

3. Equal rights for persons with disabilities

216. The Anti-Discrimination and Accessibility Acts prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and contains provisions on universal design and individual accommodation.

217. Many people with disabilities encounter obstacles in their daily lives due to lack of accessibility in their physical surroundings. Accessibility is crucial for ensuring full participation in society. The Government is systematically seeking to improve accessibility by promoting universal design.

218. The Government's action plan for universal design and better accessibility for the period 2009-2013 is intended to support the implementation of the Anti-Discrimination and Accessibility Act, universal design in the Planning and Building Act and other legislation that safeguards the rights of people with disabilities. The priority areas are outdoor areas, planning, buildings, transport and ICT (Information and Communication Technology). The Government is also promoting universal design in workplaces in the public sector and in private enterprises that offer goods and services to the general public.

4. Equal rights for ethnic minorities

219. The Anti-Discrimination Act on ethnicity regulates protection against discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, religion and belief.

220. The Government firmly believes that all forms of racism, discrimination and harassment must be prevented. Every citizen is responsible for combating unjustified differential treatment. However, the authorities and the majority population have a greater responsibility than others. Discrimination may be experienced by all population groups and in all areas of society. However, discrimination is not always implemented by the majority population against the minority population. Prejudice, scepticism, xenophobia, racism and other forms of discrimination occur between and within minority groups, and may also be directed towards the majority population.

221. Studies show that people from ethnic minorities are particularly vulnerable to discrimination. Many complaints handled by the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud have to do with ethnic discrimination in connection with working life and the public administration. Hate crime that targets minority groups is another challenge. Although the police receive few reports of hate crime, there is reason to believe that the true figures are much higher.

222. To be effective, the fight against racism and discrimination requires a continuous, systematic effort. The Government has strengthened its work in this field by developing an action plan for the 2009-2012 period to promote equality and prevent ethnic discrimination. The action plan, extended throughout 2013, focuses on discrimination based on the ethnicity, national origin, descent, skin colour, language, religion or beliefs of immigrants and their children, the Sami people and the national minorities.

223. The action plan includes 66 new measures with particular focus on working life, public services, day-care and education, and the housing market, and discrimination in restaurants, bars and nightclubs. The Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion is coordinating the implementation of the action plan, which involves nine ministries. During the period covered by the plan, the Government will collaborate with the eight main social partners on implementing the measures to prevent discrimination in working life.

224. One of the key objectives of the action plan is to ensure that the new provisions relating to anti-discrimination activities and reporting in the Anti-Discrimination Act on ethnicity are properly followed up. Another key objective is to increase knowledge on the nature, scope and causes of discrimination with a view to initiating more targeted measures.

5. Indigenous peoples

225. The Sami are the indigenous people of Norway. The Sami traditionally live in the northern and eastern parts of Norway, and in parts of Sweden, Finland and Russia.

226. Norwegian policy towards the Sami is based on the recognition that the state of Norway was established on the territory of two peoples, the Norwegians and the Sami, and that both these peoples have the same right to develop their culture and language.

227. There is no overall registration of the Sami population. It is therefore difficult to generate statistics on the Sami as a group. However, the number of Sami living in Norway is generally estimated at approximately 40 000.

228. The rights of the Sami are protected under Article 110a in the Norwegian Constitution, which states that "it is the responsibility of the authorities of the State to create conditions enabling the Sami people to preserve and develop their language, culture and way of life." The rights of the Sami are also protected in more specific provisions in the Act concerning Sámediggi (the Sami parliament) and other Sami legal matters (the Sami Act), in other legislation, and through Norway's obligations under several international conventions, particularly article 27 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and ILO Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries.

229. The Sami have their own parliament, Sámediggi, which was established in 1989 under the Sami Act. It is a representative and elected political body for the Sami in Norway, in particular as a party in the dialogue with central government. The business of Sámediggi is any matter that in the view of the parliament particularly affects the Sami people. Approximately 15 000 Sami are registered on the electoral roll for elections to Sámediggi.

230. In recent years, policies towards the Sami have given priority to recognising and strengthening minority and indigenous rights and on development of an infrastructure of institutions in Sami society. Legislation, procedures and programmes have been established to strengthen the Sami languages, culture, industries and society. Of particular importance are the Finnmark Act, the Procedures for Consultations between the State Authorities and Sámediggi and the Plan of Action for Strengthening Sami Languages.

231. As an indigenous people, the Sami are entitled to be consulted on matters that may affect them directly. Sámediggi and the central government authorities have concluded an agreement on how these consultations are to be carried out in the Procedures for Consultations between the State Authorities and Sámediggi of 11 May 2005. In some matters the authorities may also be obliged to consult with other Sami interests in addition to Sámediggi, particularly in matters that directly affect Sami land use, such as reindeer husbandry.

232. In 2005 the Storting adopted the Finnmark Act. Through the Finnmark Act, ownership rights to areas in Finnmark County to which the state either held formal title or was considered owner without formal title (about 95 per cent of Finnmark County) were transferred to an independent entity, the Finnmark Estate ("Finnmarkseiendommen"). A board consisting of six members, three of whom are appointed by Sámediggi and three by the Finnmark County Council, governs the Finnmark Estate. The Act also regulates the local population and other people's use of certain natural resources on the Finnmark Estate's grounds.

233. The Finnmark Act confirms that the Sami have, collectively and individually, acquired rights to the land in Finnmark through prolonged use of land and water areas. It follows explicitly from the act that it does not interfere with any rights acquired by Sami and other people through prescription or immemorial usage. To clarify the existence of such rights, the act prescribes the establishment of the Finnmark Commission. The Commission's task is to investigate rights of use and ownership to the land that was

transferred to the Finnmark Estate through the Finnmark Act. As of August 2013, the Commission has completed its investigations in two geographical fields, and is currently working on another four fields. Disputes that arise after the Commission has finished its investigations in a field may be brought before the Uncultivated Land Tribunal for Finnmark. The Tribunal is currently under establishment. The judgments of the Tribunal may be appealed to the Norwegian Supreme Court.

6. National minorities

234. Jews, Kvens/Norwegian Finns, Roma, Romani people/Tater and Forest Finns are considered to be national minorities in Norway. National minorities are defined as groups with a long-term connection to the country.

235. Norway ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 1993 and the European Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in 1999. The authorities wish to maintain a close dialogue with the organisations that represent the different national minorities in order to ensure that their views are heard. The Inter-ministerial Coordinating Committee for National Minorities and the Contact Forum between the National Minorities and the Central Authorities have been established for the purpose of promoting greater awareness of the status of national minorities in society and the activities of national minorities in civil society.

236. A grant for national minorities is provided each year from the central government budget. The aim of the grant scheme is to support activities that promote active participation in society, ensure equal opportunities for all and combat discrimination. The grant scheme is intended to help to ensure that the principles enshrined in the European Framework Convention are implemented in practice.

237. Applications may be submitted for basic support for the operating costs of organisations based on a national minority or funding for projects aimed at disseminating information on the situation of national minorities, self-help activities and transfrontier cooperation. Organisations, municipalities, counties and others who are engaged in activities related to national minorities may also apply for project funding from this grant scheme.

238. In order to promote active participation in society and prevent discrimination, there is a special focus on education, both for adults and children. In addition, efforts are made to promote reconciliation and confidence-building between the Norwegian authorities and the national minorities. Several of the national minorities have experienced a difficult past involving assimilation policies and measures. As part of the reconciliation process there has been a need to address these issues and establish a shared understanding of past injustices.

7. Immigrants

239. Fourteen per cent of Norway's population has an immigrant background (2012 figures), defined as persons with two parents born abroad, of which 593 300 are immigrants (12 per cent), and 117 100 (2 per cent) are born in Norway to immigrant parents. The Government white paper, *En helhetlig integreringspolitikk – mangfold og fellesskap* (A comprehensive integration policy – diversity and community), presented on 26 October 2012, deals with the opportunities and challenges related to the position as a country and a society with immigration. Although there are large variations between groups and individuals, statistics show that living conditions among the immigrant population as a whole are poorer than among the general population. The most important goal for the Government's integration policy is to ensure that all people who live in Norway are able to utilise their resources and participate in the community. In August 2013 a comprehensive action plan to improve the use of immigrants' resources and skills in the labour market was

presented. All inhabitants in Norway have rights and obligations and should have the opportunity to participate in and contribute to working and social life. Everyone should contribute according to his or her abilities. No person should be discriminated against or excluded because he or she has an immigrant background. All public authorities have a responsibility to help to meet the goals of the integration policy. The Action Plan for Integration and Social Inclusion of the Immigrant Population (2007–2010) has been successfully implemented, and the majority of the measures are now part of the regular policy. In order to strengthen coordination and interaction between responsible ministries, the Goals for Social Inclusion of the Immigrant Population scheme is under revision.

240. Newly arrived immigrants are in a vulnerable position in the labour market. According to the Introduction Act, the municipalities have been required since 1 September 2004 to offer such immigrants an introductory programme. The programme is intended for persons who have been granted asylum or a residence permit on humanitarian grounds or collective protection under conditions of mass outflow, and persons who have been given a residence or work permit as family members of these persons. The aim of the programme is to give newly-arrived immigrants the opportunity to participate in working and social life and to increase their financial independence. The introductory programme may last for up to two years on a full-time basis. and provides basic Norwegian language skills, basic insight into Norwegian society and preparation for participation in working life and/or education, as a minimum. Everyone who participates in an introductory programme is to have an individually tailored plan and is entitled to an introduction benefit, equal to twice the basic amount under the National Insurance Scheme.

241. The Introduction Act also regulates the right and obligation to participate in 600 hours of Norwegian language training and a social studies programme free of charge. Migrant workers and their families are also required to take part in a 300-hour instruction programme, but this is not free of charge. People holding an EEA-EFTA work/residence permit are not obliged to take a language course. The programme consists of 550 hours of language training and 50 hours of social studies in a language the immigrant understands. The municipalities are required to arrange for further language instruction, up to a maximum of 2 400 hours, if the person concerned needs it. This applies to persons who have a right to take part in language courses free of charge. The right to take part in the programme applies for three years from the date the work/residence permit is granted or from the date of arrival in Norway. The municipality's obligation to provide further instruction applies for five years from the date on which the right or obligation to participate in the programme took effect. After 1 September 2013, participants with a right and an obligation to take part in language training are also required to finish their training with a mandatory test. In order to obtain a settlement permit and Norwegian nationality, immigrants must complete their obligation to take part Norwegian language training.

242. Some immigrants have lived in Norway for several years without a permanent attachment to the labour market and are dependent on social security. These individuals are also in a vulnerable position. In 2005 the Government started a project called Second Chance, which is a qualifying programme aimed at immigrants who do not have a secure foothold in the labour market, are recipients of social security benefits and have lived in Norway for several years. The objective is to ensure permanent attachment to the labour market for the participants. The project is intended to test the model of the introduction programme on a new group. The project was in operation from 2005 to 2012. Based on this project, the Government introduced the Job-change programme in 2013, where the goal is to increase the employment rate for immigrants without a connection to working life. The main target group is women who are staying at home. NOK 57 million has been allocated to nearly 50 municipalities in 2013.

243. Norway has implemented several measures to ensure access to higher education for all. These measures include a comprehensive system for student financial support, subsidised student housing schemes and several other welfare benefits. Public higher education is also without tuition fees. Private higher education institutions receiving public funding are not allowed to pay dividends to their owners or in any other way extract funds from the institution.

244. However, the right to education does confer the right to enrol in any programme the applicant wishes. All qualified applicants are ranked according to their merits from upper secondary education or the equivalent. Certain rules and regulations are in place for ranking applicants with a foreign educational background.

245. The aim of the Norwegian student financial support scheme is to reduce economic inequalities between students and thus provide equal access to education, independent of gender, origin, age, disability and social and financial barriers.

246. Student financial support may be granted to immigrants or foreign citizens who meet certain criteria defining ties to Norway. As a general rule, immigrants are eligible for student support if they have legal residence in Norway and if the studies do not comprise the legal basis for residence. For instance, immigrants who have been granted protection (asylum) or who have been granted a residence permit in connection with a family reunion with a Norwegian or a foreign citizen are entitled to student support on the same footing as Norwegian citizens. Citizens of EEA or EFTA countries with permanent residence in Norway and/or with status as an employee in Norway are also eligible.

247. Foreign citizens who meet the criteria for eligibility receive the same support for maintenance, travel and tuition as Norwegian students. Norwegian student support includes additional grant schemes for provision of children and for sickness. There is also a special grant scheme for pupils in upper secondary education who have been granted protection (asylum) in Norway.

248. The Norwegian Government offers a special support scheme (Quota scheme) to a limited number of students from developing countries and certain countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The objective of the scheme is to provide relevant education in Norway that will benefit the students' home countries when the students return.

8. Asylum seekers

249. The Government pursues a humane asylum policy in accordance with the international provisions by which Norway is bound, in particular the UN Refugee Convention the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

250. According to the Norwegian Immigration Act, a foreign national who applies for protection in Norway must be offered accommodation while they are waiting for the immigration authorities to reach a decision. If the application for protection has been rejected, the foreign national will be offered accommodation pending his or her exit from Norway.

251. Asylum seekers have the same right to health care as Norwegian citizens. Applicants whose cases are rejected are offered emergency health care. Asylum seekers under 18 years of age are always offered health care on the same basis as Norwegian children.

9. Migrant workers

252. Migrant workers are in a vulnerable position in the labour market. Norway puts great emphasis on ensuring that migrant workers enjoy the same pay and working

conditions as Norwegian workers. Two action plans against social dumping have been implemented, and contain a number of measures to ensure that migrant workers are paid according to Norwegian standards.

253. Overall labour market policy in Norway consists of three main labour market schemes – vocational training, work practice and wage subsidies. An individual work capability assessment determines whether or not an individual is offered the opportunity to participate in a labour market scheme. There are also two main schemes that are directly targeted at newly-arrived immigrants: the above-mentioned introductory programme and a Norwegian language instruction programme.

254. The strong economic growth in Norway in recent years has caused labour shortages, and labour migration, particularly from the new EU member states, has increased significantly. The great majority have come from Poland, which accounted for almost 15 000 immigrants (more than 26 per cent of total immigration) in 2007. Poland has not only been the main origin country of the new wave of immigrants since 2005, it has now replaced Sweden as the single most important origin country of the total immigrant population.

255. During the favourable economic situation that prevailed until recently, many Polish labour migrants found employment in the construction industry. With the strong decline in this industry, immigrants from the new EU countries now have the second highest unemployment rate of any immigrant group in Norway, and their lack of language skills is a major obstacle to employment in other sectors, both now and in the future. Labour migrants from the new EU member countries are eligible for mainstream labour market schemes, some of which include language training.

256. Unemployment benefit for an unemployed person represents partial compensation for loss of income and is intended to provide an incentive to find a new job. In principle, labour migrants have the same right to unemployment benefit as others. However, the duration of their residence permit will determine the period during which they may receive the benefit.

257. EEA nationals may reside and work in Norway for a period of up to three months without a permit. Jobseekers from EEA countries may stay in Norway for up to six months without a permit. Transitional rules apply to persons from the new EU countries, Bulgaria and Romania. EEA nationals who have acquired some connection with working life in Norway by working here for a certain period and paying social insurance contributions may submit claims for Norwegian unemployment benefits on the basis of unemployment benefit rights earned in another EEA country.

258. The local government sector is responsible for services that ensure that all inhabitants in their respective areas experience good living conditions. The municipality is responsible for implementing the Social Services Act. Those unable to support themselves by working or exercising financial rights are entitled to financial support, which is intended to make the person self-supporting.

259. In spite of the current international financial situation, Norway still aims to achieve a high level of employment, low unemployment and an inclusive labour market with room for everyone who is able and willing to work. The main goals of labour market policy are therefore to facilitate high participation in employment and efficient utilisation of the available workforce by ensuring a well-functioning labour market and inclusive and well-ordered workplaces. Extensive labour market and rehabilitation measures are aimed at contributing to high employment and low unemployment, and combating exclusion by helping people with labour market-related problems to find and keep a relevant job.

260. The Norwegian Employment and Welfare Administration is responsible for implementing labour market policy. The Administration facilitates efforts to match jobseekers with vacant jobs and to ensure comprehensive help and security for persons who need work-oriented assistance to find and keep employment.

261. In 2006 Norway presented a plan of action for combating poverty. The plan is based on an integrated approach and focuses on measures to prevent people from experiencing poverty and social exclusion. These include general economic policy, employment and labour market policies, education, social security and other measures to reduce inequalities of income. The goal is that everyone is to be given the opportunity to enter employment. Norway has developed social programmes for those on the margins of the labour market to increase their labour market participation.

262. The efforts to reduce poverty and social exclusion have both a short-term and a long-term perspective. The short-term goal is to reduce poverty and improve the situation for vulnerable groups, and the long-term goal is to protect the next generation from poverty and inequality.

263. There is no simple recipe for action or solution to this problem, and inclusive welfare systems are necessary. The Nordic welfare model is marked by a relatively large redistribution of wealth through the income tax system, universal welfare systems, a comprehensive, publicly financed education system, an active labour market policy and a flexible labour market. The welfare model has resulted in less poverty and inequality and a more equitable income distribution in Norway than in many other countries. Norway continues to build on this model, and is reforming and further developing the welfare system.

264. Norway has also developed strategies and action plans in several other areas that promote social inclusion and poverty reduction by combating inequality, including white papers on education and inequality, a national strategy for reducing social inequalities in health, a National Action Plan on Alcohol and Drugs, and the above-mentioned Action Plan for Integration and Social Inclusion of the Immigrant Population and Goals for Social Inclusion.

265. In its efforts, the Government has strengthened cooperation and communication with user and other organisations and associations in the voluntary sector. These organisations are important cooperation partners for both central and local government. A liaison committee has been established to strengthen the dialogue between the Government and self-appointed representatives of socially and financially disadvantaged persons.

10. Freedom of choice in respect of where to live

266. The point of departure for the Government's regional policy is the establishment and maintenance of conditions that ensure Norway's inhabitants real freedom to live in the place of their choice. The Government's objective is to maintain the main features of the current settlement pattern and to further develop the plurality of historical and cultural resources deriving from it.

267. Rural and regional policy is an integrated part of the Government's overall political agenda. A well-developed infrastructure is vital to positive development in a country like Norway, with its sparse population and long distances. The Government will continue to strengthen municipal finances, introduce large-scale expansion of road and railway construction programmes, set new objectives for the expansion of broadband infrastructure and pursue an active and differentiated policy for economic growth and jobs in order to secure the goal of full employment.

268. The Government believes that local challenges are most effectively met by local initiatives. It therefore gives priority to providing support for the municipality as a development driver and for community development. In this way the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development invites the county authorities to cooperate further on strengthening and more effectively mobilising community development initiatives in the municipalities. The ministry is also considering the allocation of additional funds to local and regional projects focusing on knowledge creation and the development of strategies designed to attract new inhabitants and make local communities more attractive to live in. By adapting policy measures and encouraging regional cooperation, county authorities can often support local industry in a more targeted and coordinated manner than is possible through direct state involvement, which traditionally has a sector-oriented focus.

269. The primary resource of a modern economy is the creativity and ingenuity of its people, particularly their ability to deal with socio-economic change through innovation. The Government's policy is to promote these resources where people live rather than forcing them to move to concentrated urban areas. It intends to facilitate innovation and restructuring by businesses in all parts of the country. In order to stimulate new activity, the Government will continue to place significant emphasis on efforts to stimulate entrepreneurship: a new action plan for entrepreneurship in the education system, a more systematic approach to entrepreneurship advisory services and increased funding for entrepreneurs in order to help them create new high-quality jobs. The Government also emphasises that innovation and entrepreneurship from women must be stimulated more effectively than at present.

270. North Norway faces particular challenges because of its sparse population, the long distances between settlements and the small labour markets. The Government is therefore giving priority to North Norway in order to stimulate land-based business development and improve the region's infrastructure.